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# WHERE IS CHRIST?

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# WHERE IS CHRIST?

# WHERE IS CHRIST?

## A Question for Christians

BY

AN ANGLICAN PRIEST
IN CHINA

WITH A FOREWORD
BY THE
BISHOP OF EDINBURGH

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
1919

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To HIM and in HIM
To Parents who brought us up
To Liberty and Unity

# FOREWORD

## WHERE IS CHRIST?

SOME of the best contributions to Christian thought have lately come to us from the Mission Field. Such books as *Adventure for God* and *Presence*, by the Bishop of Philippine Islands, and *The One Christ*, by the Bishop of Zanzibar, are examples of the depth and width of thought which are gained in new lands unfettered by tradition or conventionalism. And in this book for which I have been asked to write a short foreword we have another help to our thinking in the great question put to us by an Anglican priest in China. After he had won high honours at Oxford and practical experience in Oxford House, the author obeyed the call that was sounded during the Pan-Anglican year and made the great adventure for God in North China. He reached the land of his adoption to find his life endangered by the Revolution in 1911, when his friend and coadjutor was killed by his side. Some years' work in the country villages, south of Peking, have led him to feel the great dangers we are in through our unhappy divisions, and in this book he throws out the arresting question, "Where is Christ?" That question he feels quite rightly cannot be fully met by saying He is in Christians, because Christ must have corporate as well as individual expression. It is just this which is

lacking. We want to know where He is "in relation to the Church and to the modern world." To the bigoted Roman Catholic such a question would argue the failure of schism. "We know well where Christ is," he would say, "in His Holy Church, and only there will we find Him." But this arrogant assumption has in these years of war received a rude shock. Never has the Church of Rome seemed weaker in the eyes of the world.

The author, in presenting material which he hopes may help towards an answer, feels clearly that Christ's Presence cannot involve any limitations of time and space, and that it must correspond to the widest consciousness of Christian experience. He thinks that the Church's failure, manifested by its divisions and lack of influence, is "a failure to grow up, a failure to keep up with the facts of life. The past has eclipsed the present. Forms and institutions, though necessary, have exercised an altogether disproportionate influence, and Christ present in the Body has not been able to express Himself." The question is pursued with eager interest and force from chapter to chapter, and is set forth with much ability and abundance of quotation, with strong reasons not only why we should think it out but along what lines the answer may be found. Not every one will find himself in agreement with all the thoughts that are expressed. That is neither possible nor to be desired in a question so large and difficult, but our gratitude is earned by one who with originality and insight attacks the main issues and rightly demands that all those in positions of authority and leadership should fearlessly face the consequences to which the Spirit of Christ may lead them. I heartily commend

this courageous study of the question to the consideration of my fellow Churchmen throughout the Anglican Communion—a subject which is of paramount importance to all who feel that things that are shaken are being removed in order that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

GEORGE, BISHOP OF EDINBURGH.

# PREFACE

THE New Testament quotations in the following chapters are taken sometimes from the Revised Version, but more often from *The New Testament, a New Translation,* by Dr. James Moffatt. What we all want is not the letter but the spirit. A new translation such as that just named seems to make the New Testament a new book: at the cost of the familiar sounds we gain new access to the original spirit. Now this is a notable experience of missionaries in foreign lands, especially in such countries as China and Japan where the genius of the language is utterly different from that of the whole European family. The necessity of turning your sentences and paragraphs inside out in order to present them in Chinese form involves the necessity of turning your thoughts inside out in order to find the right presentment to Chinese minds. In giving lessons on the Gospels to keen schoolboys who have grown up to fourteen or fifteen with no knowledge of Christianity, the standpoint and assumptions of ordinary English lesson-books seem provincial, conventional.

The question presented in this book seemed to arise out of a class of Chinese schoolmasters studying the New Testament for the first time. On furlough in England I put it to several friends, and found, for the most part, that they, like myself, were not ready with an answer.

We have all been preoccupied. To one viewing with eyes fresh from China English life in home and Church in the months just before the war, preoccupation seemed a deepening feature. Out of that preoccupation has grown this greater: two years of war, and no end in sight—no end of international hatred. What have English missionaries now to offer to such a great people as the Chinese? Surely we are not to win them over just to our ideas of Christianity. That would be an example of the essential devilry of proselytism. No: the question for them and for us is, Where is Christ, in relation to us all? Where are we, in relation to Him?

Begun in England in the first few months of the war, and continued by degrees in the interior of China, far from European conditions and facilities, these few chapters are rough and incomplete. There is far more to be said, which can be better said by others: and perhaps before we say much more we may get at the answer to this Question: for on it depends all the sequel.

The writer professes nothing original, nothing unique in these pages. It is a sifting of old materials rather than a discovery of new that is the urgent need. Two writers among many who have lately sifted out the same pearl of great price are Bishop Brent in *Presence*, and Dr. A. W. Robinson in *Christ and the Church: a Re-statement of Belief.*

"A man's religion," said Carlyle, "consists not of the many things he is in doubt of, and tries to believe, but of the few he is assured of, and has no need of effort for believing. His religion, whatever it may be, is a discerned fact."

This book is addressed to fellow-believers; there-

fore what in it may seem egoistic is but an expression of one among many, who all draw life from the same Source, and live it each for himself in individual reality. It is for the sake of reality that mention is made of personal experiences.

It is addressed to fellow-believers in the living Christ, who all know Him as their Lord and their God, but see not yet all things subject to Him, even within His Church. That there at least He may be supreme is the hope in which these pages have been written: supreme in His Church first, that thereafter the kingdoms of the world may give Him their allegiance.

SOMEWHERE IN CHINA.
*Christmas*, 1916.

War conditions have delayed publication of this book, and thus put some of its time references out of date. But the position is essentially unchanged; the Church's lack of vision still seems to require prescription of the original "eye-salve."

*May*, 1919.

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# Where is Christ?

## A QUESTION FOR CHRISTIANS

### CHAPTER I

### THE NEED OF ANSWER

THE apparent failure of Christ hardly needs dwelling on. Christian Europe is at war, and everything that Christ came to save us from is going on before our eyes. The tragedy of Christian disappointment lies on all our hearts. And the failure of Christianity has been spelt, not only by this present war, but by all the social and industrial problems growing in complexity and virulence from year to year and from generation to generation. Moreover, the child of the Church brought up in happy faith in Jesus finds in adult years that the Church of his baptism has no clear voice to utter in face of modern perplexities, presents no united front to modern evils. It is probably true to say of most members of the Church to-day that the present position of the Church in no sense answers to their convictions.

Yet there is no waning of our faith in Christ. To us as individuals He is no less the real Saviour than He was to men of old. Every missionary, every mis-

sioner, knows that His power fails not. To soldiers on the field of battle He is what He has ever been to those who lay down their lives for the brethren.

Thus the apparent failure of Christianity is not in individual lives, but rather in the world at large and in the Church as a whole. It is the believing Christian that is in trouble about Christ; the man who has found Christ now yearns to find Him in the new conditions of society. The question, "Where is Christ?" is asked by us who know Him.

At least it surely must be asked if we are to keep things in proportion. For if we are assured of the presence of Christ we need not be much troubled about any other question in religion. And yet religious controversy and theological discussion seem to revolve around a multiplicity of topics other than this, so that the minds of Christians are apt to be diverted from this central point. The Kikuyu controversy affords a striking illustration of this. One of the Bishops who took part in the united Communion Service, in the subsequent account of the proceedings concluded with the statement that one thing at least was certain, that the Master Himself blessed the occasion with His Presence. Now surely it is noteworthy that in all the controversy that has taken place about what was then done, while many points of doctrine and Church order have been debated, no attention whatever seems to have been directed to the question whether this statement that Christ Himself was present was true to fact or not. It might seem that if it be true, then there can be no further question or dispute as to the rightness of what took place; and on the other hand if it be untrue, such a glaring misstatement on the only question that mattered ought

to be capable of some kind of refutation. We surely have not got to the point that everything matters except whether Christ is with us or not. To every one of us Christians it is the one thing that does matter, and it is the one thing that matters to the Church. So Father Kelly in *The Church and Religious Unity*, explaining why Catholics prize the Sacraments, says: "The position which I am trying to explain can all be expressed in the words 'I want Christ,' and I mean that in just the sense of the child crying in the night 'I want mother.'" No substitute will do. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" "In Thy presence is the fulness of joy."

We all "want Christ." We want to know where He is in this modern world of ours. For in our hearts we are sure that if we knew the answer to that question we could all go forward as one body to claim the world for Him with no less confident enthusiasm, but with far greater resources at our disposal, than were possessed by those first Christians, to whom the answer to the question was not in doubt. Are there not enough Christians in almost any town in Europe to sweep it clean of organized iniquity, if only they were united in Christ's service? Even in this vast heathen land of China the number of Chinese communicants outside the Roman and Greek Missions has grown from 177,000 in 1907 to 270,000 in 1916. What might we not do if we were wholly united? What might not He do through us?

The Bampton Lectures by Peile on *The Reproach of the Gospel*, and by Hobhouse on *The Church and the World in Idea and in History*, voiced our Christian dissatisfaction with both Church and World as they are to-day. But do we not now want less pathos

and more confidence in our tone? That our Lord bravely facing the initial facts of His tremendous enterprise frankly acknowledged that the way was narrow and very few were finding it, is no ground now that after His tremendous victories in every land we should harbour any doubt of His ultimate victory over all His enemies, or of His power to accomplish His purpose of saving the whole world.

But to that end we want, He wants, a different Church from that which is now in evidence. We need to get rid of this outrageous contrast between individual faith and the corporate expression of it. If He is my God, He must be the world's God; if He is my Lord in personal communion, He must be the Church's Lord in immediate personal control. If I know where He is for me, I must know where He is for society.

Hence, the question of this book. This contrast between personal faith and social expression of it will pursue us from chapter to chapter. We shall see (chap. II) that the purpose of Christ was to abolish the contrast between religious authority and individual religion by the fact of His Presence; and that the early Church (chap. III) by faith in this Presence resisted the tendency to this contrast, enlarging its formularies and its boundaries to correspond with the ascertained facts of personal experience; for, being "alive unto God," it was alive to facts. But we have to acknowledge (chap. IV) that theology has since obscured this fundamental characteristic of Christianity by losing touch with the present Christ. And therefore we still too often fail to understand God (chap. V) or man (chap. VI). But, thank God, the way in which the first Christains walked is still open to us (chap. VII). Heaven lies about us, not

only in our infancy. That each of us who have any part or lot in Church Government may realize our responsibility for the hell on earth that might be heaven is the repentant hope of the writer of these pages. Is it not for this that the National Mission has come upon us ?

## CHAPTER II

## THE GOSPEL ANSWER

"WHERE is Christ?" It is immediately obvious that we cannot deal with this question literally as implying spatial limitation. "If any man shall say unto you, 'Lo, here is Christ,' or 'there,' believe it not." As Christians we all realize that the presence and working of Christ is not limited by any material obstacle. When we speak of the presence or absence of Christ, therefore, we are thinking not of material but of spiritual conditions, conditions which transcend time and space.

Obvious as this point is, however, it seems well to study afresh the attention which our Lord directed to it during the closing hours of His earthly life.

What was needed during those few days which take such a large place in the Gospel narratives? The need He saw was to prepare His disciples for His death. That death was to be no dramatic performance; it was to be the grim reality of the real death that ends the familiar modes of intercourse and makes the great change in the personal relationship of those who love. More particularly for Him and for them it meant the change in the meaning of His Lordship. No longer would He be among them in the guise of the local and temporal Messiah of the Jews: He was to be the universal and eternal Saviour.

This new faith was taught mainly by the act—by the death He died. But since the lesson of death is more often misread by us men than any other lesson we have to learn, our Lord set Himself to help the disciples by interpreting beforehand the meaning of the coming change, "that their hearts might not be troubled," "that His joy might be within them and their joy complete." "He had loved His own in this world, and He loved them to the end." This teaching, of such primary importance to all the first Christians who experienced the transition from the local national faith to the catholic faith, naturally takes a prominent place in each of the Gospels, in the first three no less than in the fourth Gospel. For this surely is the purpose of the so-called eschatological discourses in St. Mark xiii. and the parallel passages. These eschatological passages have in recent years been largely ignored or discounted by "liberal" theologians. Their attention has been focussed on the ethical and social teachings of Jesus, which enable them to represent Him as the initiator of those ideals of social reform on which their hearts are set. Believing in the steady progress of the race by means of social amelioration and reform, towards the removal of all human ills, they like to see in Jesus the exponent of such sane principles; and they have therefore tended to slur over those parts of the Gospels which seem to repesent Him as foretelling cataclysmal changes independent of human effort. Such writers are apt to be uncertain or even negative on the subject of Christ's Divinity.[1] But the tendency to minimize one part of the evidence has now brought its natural reaction, and we have writers who repudiate the picture

[1] See below, chap. IV.

of Jesus as a liberal reformer of the modern type, and insist that He carried on the Jewish line of belief in a coming Day of the Lord when the Kingdom of God should be established by a catastrophic intervention from Heaven.

Does not this controversy, like others in the history of theological thought, afford evidence that we are viewing the things of the spiritual order out of focus? What is the discussion? Is salvation by evolution or by catastrophe? By human growth or by Divine intervention? How did our Lord view it? What did He look forward to? Note that this question concerns not merely a few selected passages in the Gospels, but the meaning of all Christ came to do and did. It concerns His revelation of God. If then we are to understand His point of view in the matter, the first essential is to recover and hold to more of His thought of God—the simple but all-embracing thought that God is Love. How does Love order the world? How does Love order History? How does Love order life for each of us? Love holds on, lets nothing go, makes the best of everything, is true to all the past. Yet Love is always new, new in devices, new in surprises, new in each new experience through which the loved ones are brought.

The experience of all lovers is a revelation of God; and few words are as good as many in the endeavour to express it. The fact of that Love as the ground of the Universe is the basis of all philosophical speculations about the One and the Many, time and eternity, unity in diversity; and is evidenced by modern discoveries of evolutionary law, showing how present life is built up out of the past. We might take as illustrations the facts of recapitulation in embryology,

or the modern science of heredity, based on the fact that "like tends to produce like," and that yet "no two creatures are ever exactly alike." [1] Other and higher illustrations are suggested by the Historical Method as applied to all departments of human life and thought. "No age can hope to understand its own mind and temper, its purpose and ideals, except through a study of the past from which it has sprung." [2] The basal facts of life are the operations of Love, which always uses the old, yet is always bringing to light new possibilities of growth and progress.

How then does Love work in human history? By evolution or by catastrophe? by human growth or by Divine intervention? From this modern viewpoint, which takes in all times and all peoples, we can see that God is operative in and through both—the growth and the catastrophe. Men living on the level stretches of history when all seems man-made tend to lose thought of God: and again, in the terror and the darkness, when the old land-marks are blotted from sight, and homes and kingdoms are broken up, men tend to despair of God. But we, from the modern point of view, can trace the Hand of God through all, in the changeless principles and laws of His working; we know both His immanence in the world, and His transcendence of its circumstances. The modern scientific view, just as far as it is loyally accepted, frees us from the prejudice of local relationships, and the narrow-mindedness of temporary conditions, and brings us out into the broad spaces of the peace and wisdom of God.

[1] See, e.g., *Heredity*, by J. A. S. Watson ("The People's Books," Jack, 6*d*.).

[2] Storr, *Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century*.

Now we Christians are aware that this free outlook on life is our insight into God, as Jesus revealed Him. We come back then to the point that this view of God is what our Lord sought to give to His disciples and to the world.

How then did He behave to the local and temporary thoughts and feelings of His day and nation? First, He was conspicuously loyal to them; loyal to the traditional hope, passionate in His devotion to Jerusalem. But also, and still more conspicuously, He taught the new fulfilment of that old hope, the new way of self-oblation to that old ideal. For His life was the life of God, and His teaching the truth of God. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." Life and teaching made known the living God, the Father, with Whom the very hairs on your head are all numbered.

So in His last hours we see Him concerned to secure this belief to His followers, through all that might obscure it: through His own death; through the fall of Jerusalem; through all future persecutions, wars or troubles of any kind. And belief in that love of God means belief in Him present with them still, despite the impending change of relationship brought about by His Death. The old fellowship is to be continued and deepened under the new conditions.

It is then disastrous to proper understanding of the Gospel to regard our Lord at St. Mark xiii. as abruptly forsaking His habitual attention to present spiritual needs and taking up the rôle of Lecturer on Apocalyptic. The concentration of attention on external circumstances is precisely the common human error from which He is seeking to deliver them; the error of

splitting experience up into sections, and making bogies of these lumps of misunderstood facts. His thought is not so much of distant events, of time and space, as of the spiritual experience of His loved ones in the trials and persecutions that He knew must lie before them, in the near future. And so by familiar parable of the clouds He tells them of that Presence which eye cannot penetrate and which is not limited by material hindrances of earthly distance. To the lonely martyr on distant lands no earthly friend can journey to the rescue, but Christ will come to him in ways beyond his knowing. Yea, from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven will He gather His elect. The same truth is impressed by that other striking metaphor of the carcase and the vultures : no matter how solitary the spot in which the dead body falls, soon and without fail there gather to it out of the unseen the ministers of God's will : even so Christ will find His faithful. " Go and make disciples of all nations. I will be with you all the time, to the very end of the world."

Thus interpreted the Synoptic Gospels are at one with St. John's Gospel in representing our Lord's mind during those last hours as almost wholly given to the preparation of His disciples for that change in relationship which was to mean to them not separation but a new and universal mode of Presence. " I will not leave you forlorn ; I am coming to you. A little while longer and the world will see me no more, but you will see me, because I am living and you will be living too. You will understand, on that day, that I am in My Father and you are in Me and I am in you. . . . If any one loves Me he will obey My word,

and My Father will love him and we will come to him and take up Our abode with him." [1]

The universality of Christ's Presence, then, is what the Gospels make both the culmination of their story and the climax of His teaching. "One greater than the temple is here." "Neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father." "Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." For words like these the Jews killed Him. He was subversive of their religious position.

Can it be that we with our particularist claims—we Catholics who think that others are outside His catholic body, we Evangelicals who think that others have missed the blessings of the Gospel—can it be that we have all been doing what the Jews did, and in effect crucifying the Son of God afresh and putting Him to an open shame? Does not every particularist claim to the Christ constitute the essential refusal of Him, the fundamental denial of His Godhead?

## NOTE TO CHAPTER II

### OUR LORD'S "ESCHATOLOGY"

Since the above mode of interpretation of the eschatological teaching of the Gospels may suggest questions to some minds used to interpreting these passages otherwise, I venture to add here a suggested analysis of the teaching of St. Matthew xxiv.

1. Do not be misled by any man claiming to be the Christ (vers. 4–5).

2. Do not regard external troubles as the end: they will come, trouble on trouble: but the Gospel of the

[1] St. John xiv. 18–23.

Kingdom is the appointed end for all the world (vers. 6–14).

3. The fall of Jerusalem is inevitable; but God cares for you through all that is to come (vers. 15–22).

4. Do not think you have to run after any Christ: Christ will find each of you surely enough (vers. 23–28).

5. Earth's days of misery will always lead direct to heavenly succour. In however remote a spot they suffer, Christ will rescue His elect (vers. 29–31).

6. Always take troubles as indicating His nearness (vers. 32–33).

7. This will be found true in the experience of this generation; and is an eternal truth, not transient (vers. 34–35).

8. No one can determine beforehand the time of Christ's arrival; it is the crisis of each individual life, coming unperceived, unexpected, in the midst of preoccupations or indifference. Be always ready (vers. 36–51).

St. Matthew xxv.—The universal import of the three parables in this chapter has been expounded by many a preacher. Here, therefore, I would only note two points as following up the thought of the previous chapter: (1) Our Lord is dealing with universal principles of the moral life. Cf. verse 29, "To every one who has shall more be given and richly given: but from him who has nothing, even what he has shall be taken." (2) The personal concern of God and of Christ with the details of every man's life.

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"If we would be loyal to His teaching, we shall not allow the bright prospect of His second coming to blind our eyes to the reality of His presence with us all the days; nor shall we strain our ears so eagerly to catch the sound of the arch-angel's trump, that we fail to hear the call which comes to us day by day on earth: 'Follow Thou Me.'" (Conclusion of *Primitive Christian Eschatology*, by E. C. Dewick, Cambridge University Press, 1912.)

## CHAPTER III

# THE NEW TESTAMENT EXPERIENCE

CHRISTIANITY is nothing if it is not an experience. The Bible is nothing if it is not an expression of men's real experience of God; and the New Testament is nothing if it is not the record and interpretation of men's actual experience of Christ. That experience was precisely what we have just noted as promised by Him in the Gospels. It was new experience of Christ that brought the disciples together again after His Death. It was in the new unity of belief in Him alive through death that they became imbued with power from on high to go out and claim the world for Him. They proceeded to gather into one fellowship all who accepted their declaration of the present power of the living Christ: "about three thousand souls were brought in that day" (Acts ii. 41). "Brought in" to what? Into a life of such unity that all kept together, and none were suffered to go in want, and the root instincts and habits of self were transformed; and into a life of such power that sickness and disease gave way before their victorious advance (Acts ii. 42–47). "You killed the Pioneer of Life. But God raised Him from the dead, as we can bear witness. He it is who has given strength to this man" (Acts iii. 15–16).

" Go and tell the people all about this Life " was the Divine commission to the Apostles that made them bold to obey God rather than men (Acts v. 20–29).

This experience of life, new life, is the basis of the New Testament : a new life which men could see being lived and expressed in all the manifestations of the unity of the Church ; and into the secret of its source they were admitted by the Christians' preaching of Christ. Seeing the life, men by faith accepted the announcement of its unseen Giver, and being thereon admitted into the fellowship, themselves experienced its power. Such in brief is the history of the early chapters of the Acts.

This experience of the living Christ brought conviction that the goal of human hopes had been reached by that generation. On that conviction the Church was founded. That is the meaning of all those claims to the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. These are " the last days " predicted by the prophet Joel (Acts ii. 16–17). The old ideals were now being realized. So we read in these chapters how the fellowship grew, the fellowship of men with Christ and with one another—the one Life in its two aspects.[1]

But it was very hard to keep to it. Worse than external persecutions were all the inner influences that were against them from tradition and the existing social and religious order. A familiar instance of this difficulty is Peter at Antioch (Gal. iii. 11–14). So the earliest controversies of the Church arose out of this new life encountering the obstacles of the old, the all-embracing spirit of fellowship opposed by traditional exclusiveness. What were to be the limits of this fellowship of life, this life of fellowship ? Who might

[1] See below, p. 41, further note on the story of Acts iii.

be admitted, or regarded as true members? Debate was ended in each case by recognition of the facts of God's working. "What God has cleansed, you must not regard as common."[1] "If God has given them exactly the same gift as He gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I—how could I try—to thwart God? On hearing this they desisted and glorified God, saying, 'So God has actually allowed the Gentiles to repent and live.'"[2] "So the whole meeting was quieted and listened to Barnabas and Paul, recounting the signs and wonders God had performed by them among the Gentiles."[3] So the Church learned that fellowship was to be limited by no Divinely-given privileges from the past. The present working of Christ transcended all tradition. The Church accordingly advanced along the lines of God's working. In early days it was indeed known as "the Way."

Behind New Testament theology lies this New Testament experience of facts—facts respected as the acts of God. It is therefore as interpreting the experience that the theology is to be understood.[4] The worship of Christ as God means that man felt His creative love constraining them, knew His creative power transforming them, became new men in all the relationships of life and in their inmost being.[5] It was men whose whole religion was love that could enunciate and hold the doctrine that God is Love. It was men of a fellowship, all governed by one spirit, that learnt to recognize and adore the Holy Spirit

[1] Acts x. 15.
[2] Acts xi. 17, 18.
[3] Acts xv. 12.
[4] Cf. Walpole, *Vital Religion*, chap. xiii. and passim.
[5] 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15.

operative in them all. The revelation of the Trinity came to them by degrees in the facts of their life. Their Christology was their verdict on experience. The conditions of Church life enabled the Apostle to say: "He, Christ, is the Head, and under Him, as the entire Body is welded together and compacted by every joint with which it is supplied, the due activity of each part enables the Body to grow and build itself up in Love." [1]

A profitable line of study of the New Testament is to read through the several books with a view to noting all that they say on the one topic of Christ's relation to men. For most of us it will bring into a new and startling prominence the view of Christ which we may perhaps best express by the metaphor of the atmosphere in which and by which we live. "In Christ," "in the Lord," is the familiar form of St. Paul's most frequent thought of Him. This is the glorious tonic atmosphere of Church life in each locality, the all-pervading, all-embracing atmosphere of the Church universal. It is to St. Paul the essential meaning of the Christian's status: "the saints in Christ Jesus"; "the faithful in Christ Jesus"; "one man in Christ Jesus"; "called in the Lord"; "sons of God in Christ Jesus"; "in Christ Jesus I begat you"; "are ye not my work in the Lord?"; "blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ." These terms mean that the Christian fellowship was known to be a fellowship with Christ. No: that mode of expression is and was inadequate: for Christ was not merely the fellow of each, at their side, but above and around them all. The Spirit of the community, which possessed each of them, was recognized as Christ's

[1] Eph. iv. 15, 16.

Spirit, creative in them of the life of fellowship, the fresh spring of spiritual wisdom. They had experience of arrival at a new plane of consciousness, in which life is new, at peace with God and man, free from conventional trammels, filled with sense of triumph. The essence of Christian status was not individual conversion by individual Apostle, but entry into the all-pervading life of Christ. "There is a new creation whenever a man comes to be in Christ; what is old is gone, the new has come. It is all the doing of the God Who has reconciled me to Himself through Christ and has permitted me to be a minister of His reconciliation. For in Christ God reconciled the world to Himself instead of counting men's trespasses against them; and He entrusted me with the message of His reconciliation." [1] "You have had a taste of the kindness of the Lord; come to Him then —come to that living Stone which men have rejected and God holds choice and precious, come, and, like living stones yourselves, be built into a spiritual house." [2] "You are the elect race, the royal priesthood, the consecrated nation, the people who belong to Him, that you may proclaim the wondrous deeds of Him Who has called you from darkness to His wonderful light—you who were once no people and now are God's people, you who were once unpitied and now are pitied." [3]

This thrilling experience of fellowship produces also the Pauline metaphor of the Church as the Body of Christ. "As the human body is one and has many members, all the members of the body forming one body for all their number, so is it with Christ." [4]

[1] 2 Cor. v. 17–19. [2] 1 Pet. ii. 3–5. [3] 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10.
[4] 1 Cor. xii. 12. Eph. iv. 1–16.

Presence in Christ and belonging to one another are two sides of one fact. Christ is thus new Creator of each man, and stands to him in the absolute and ultimate relationship of God. In thus constituting the final unity of humanity, He is seen as the Final Cause, and so too as the Efficient Cause, of the universe (Col. i. 14–23). Everything was started for this and is working towards this. So the New Testament rings with the note of loyalty—loyalty based on experience and leading each loyal member on to ever new experiences, such as only the loyal can know. "Loyal," we say; and in this our day of Christian dissension men ask, "Loyal to Christ?" or "Loyal to Church?" But in those first days such question could not be. Men who knew where Christ is could not distinguish between loyalty to Christ and loyalty to the community that lived by His Life, knowing "that open secret which, though concealed from ages and generations of old, has now been disclosed to the saints of God. It is His Will that they should understand the glorious wealth which this secret holds for the Gentiles, in the fact of Christ's presence among you as your hope of glory" (Col. i. 26, 27). In his recent work, *The Problem of Christianity*,[1] Professor Royce finely works out the conception of Christianity as the Religion of Loyalty, and says: "As to the central doctrine of the Person of Christ, it was inseparable, in the mind of the Pauline Christian, from the doctrine of the living Divine Spirit present in the Church." "The exalted and Divine Christ was explicitly known and interpreted by Paul as the very life of the Church itself. And His appearance on earth had its redemp-

[1] *The Problem of Christianity.* Josiah Royce, Professor of History of Philosophy at Harvard. 2 vols. Macm., 1913.

tive meaning through its power as the work of the Founder of the beloved community." [1] "The Church was for Paul the very presence of his Lord." [2] But Professor Royce affords a notable example of the tragedy of so much of the best modern thought, which beautifully exhibits Christian principles, but professes ignorance of the Christ from Whom they proceed. Speaking of the origin of the Christian community he says: "Personally I shall never hope, in my present existence, to know anything whatever about that origin, beyond the merest commonplaces. The historical evidence at hand is insufficient to tell us how the Church originated." [3] So far removed is his actual experience of Christian loyalty from that of the early Christian community in which the religion of loyalty originated, and in which there was no doubt whatever as to how it originated.

Harnack, in his *Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, is able to find rather more definite information in the historical evidence. Cf. e.g. the following passage (vol. i., p. 103, Eng. tr.): "'Surely He hath borne our sickness and carried our sorrows: by His stripes we are healed.' This was the new truth that issued from the Cross of Jesus. It flowed out like a stream of fresh water, on the arid souls of men and on their dry morality. The morality of outward acts and regulations gave way to the conception of a life which was personal, pure and divine, which spent itself in the service of the brethren, and gave itself up ungrudgingly to death. This conception was the new principle of life. It uprooted the old life swaying to and

[1] *The Problem of Christianity*, vol. ii., pp. 359, 360.
[2] Idem, vol. i., p. 104.
[3] Ibid., Preface, p. 28.

fro between sin and virtue ; it also planted a new life whose aim was nothing short of being a disciple of Christ, and whose strength was drawn from the life of Christ Himself. The disciples went forth to preach the tidings of ' God the Saviour,' of that Saviour and Physician Whose person, deeds and sufferings were man's salvation. Paul was giving vent to no sudden or extravagant emotion, but expressing with quiet confidence what he was fully conscious of at every moment, when he wrote to the Galatians (chap. ii. ver. 20), ' I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. For the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.' Conscious of this, the primitive Christian missionaries were ready to die daily. And that was just the reasom why their cause did not collapse." Harnack goes on to show how the vitality of this faith caused the Christians to be differentiated, both by themselves and by the Greeks and Romans, as " the New People " and " the Third Race." " The inner energy of the new religion comes out in its self-chosen title of ' the New People ' or ' the Third Race '[1] just as plainly as in the testimony extorted from its opponents, that in Christianity a new *genus* of religion had actually emerged side by side with the religions of the nations and of Judaism. It does not afford much

[1] " The Greeks, Romans, and all other nations had passed for the first race (*genus primum*), in so far as they mutually recognized each other's gods or honoured foreign gods as well as their own, and had sacrifices and images. The Jews (with their national God, their exclusiveness, and a worship which lacked images but included sacrifice) constituted the second race (*genus alterum*). The Christians again (with their spiritual God, their lack of images and sacrifices and the contempt for the gods—which they shared with the Jews—) formed the third race (*genus tertium*) " (p . 273).

direct evidence upon the outward spread and strength of Christianity, for the former estimate emerged, asserted itself, and was recognized at an early period, when Christians were still, in point of numbers, a comparatively small society. But it must have been of the highest importance for the propaganda of the Christian religion to be so distinctly differentiated from all other religions, and to have so lofty a consciousness of its own position put before the world. Naturally this had a repelling influence as well upon certain circles. Still it was a token of power, and power never fails to succeed" (pp. 277–8).

The New Testament experience of Christ was thus prolonged into subsequent generations of the Church: experience of Christ not merely as sanctifying and empowering individuals, but as making out of individuals a new community. The experience of Christ was still the experience of being "in Christ," of finding one's real self not in isolation but in membership of a corporate Personality. Christ lived in the Church; the Church lived in Him.

Harnack, like many others, in giving us the facts of early Christianity, gives them as phenomena of the past. He finds them not in the Christian experience of to-day, but in the monuments of days gone by. The revelation of the eternal God has come to be regarded as a bygone event. Can we wonder at this failure of modern thought when we consider what a mess we Christians have made of our religion?

## Notes to Chapter III

## NEW TESTAMENT ESCHATOLOGY

(1) The Story of Acts iii.—The main matter of St. Peter's speech is the present situation, not the future. Accounting for the healing of the man lame from birth, he first shows that in Christ's death and resurrection the God of their Fathers has fulfilled what He had announced beforehand by the lips of all the prophets (Acts iii. 12–18); and then urges the people individually to realize that there is nothing more to wait for. "Repent then, and turn, and have your sins blotted out, so that a breathing space may be vouchsafed you, and that the Lord may send Jesus your long-decreed Christ, Who must be kept in Heaven till the great Restoration" (vers. 19–21). When? *Now:* for these are the days that have been announced by all the prophets (ver. 24); "You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant" (ver. 25); the prophet whom Moses said "God will raise up" has been raised up for you (vers. 22, 26); the long-decreed Christ whom you have hoped God will send, has been sent "to bless you, by turning each of you from your wicked ways" (vers. 20, 26). The evidence of Christ's presence afforded by the healed cripple is used to convince them of His presence to receive each of them (ver. 16); only by listening to Him can they know what life is (ver. 23). The speech was interrupted, and its immediate result on the hearers is not stated, but we can hardly be far wrong if we suppose that, for some of them at least, the case was as later at Cæsarea, "while Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who listened to what he said" (Acts x. 44). In such coming of that other Comforter Christ Himself came (St. John xiv. 16–18).

(2) 1 and 2 Thessalonians.—The Epistles to the Thessalonians are often treated as a mine of eschatological doctrine. But their main concern is not the mysterious future, but the real present. St. Paul is addressing a new little community of Christians situated in the midst of corrupt human society. We may distinguish three leading ideas in his exhortation:—

(*a*) We have the glorious prospect of Christ's triumph,

however dark things seem at present ; we all look for that final issue.

(*b*) But for us who know Christ, that Day of the Lord is not a future unrelated to the present. We are already in the Daylight. That Day, therefore, is for us not merely a Future to be waited for ; it is a Present to be conformed to (cf. 1 Thess. v. 1–11).

(*c*) This realization does not mean acquiescence in things as they are. The battle against sin has to be fought out (cf. 2 Thess. ii.).

The Church of the Thessalonians, while looking forward to Christ, is already in Christ. The position is that which St. Paul elsewhere describes as his own : " to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

(3) Eschatological Language.—Modern scholars have made us aware of the abundance of Apocalyptic literature in New Testament times. " It was inevitable that the Jewish-Christian Church should think of the future in terms of Jewish Apocalyptic. The language and details of its imagery are to be found up and down the Epistles." [1]

We are therefore unlikely to arrive at a right interpretation of such language in the New Testament unless we remember (*a*) that our Lord was bound to use the current terms, but in using them would give them (in this as in other cases) a fuller, deeper meaning than they had borne in the mouths of other teachers ; (*b*) that His first hearers may have in some cases failed to grasp the new meaning and thus misrepresented His teaching by an unintelligent literalness ; (*c*) that we run a like risk in interpreting the language of our Lord and of the New Testament writers who shared His free view of time and eternity. A prosaic treatment of poetry has been a constant bane of theology.

" The great future belongs to Jesus Christ and to His Church. This is the ultimate meaning of New Testament apocalyptic " (Swete, *The Ascended Christ*, p. 139).

[1] N. Talbot, *The Mind of the Disciples*, p. 195 (Macmillan, 1914). A bracing book for the new days.

## CHAPTER IV

## ABSENTEE CHRISTOLOGY

"THE whole Christology of the Church . . . has been its effort to conceive by thought the reality it lived on in its faith of Christ's saving work and presence for good and all" (Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, p. 330). Yes: if the Church had been governed according to the theology of its best thinkers, Christianity would surely have escaped this degradation from its high estate. But in fact a great deal of Christian writing and teaching is very confused. So often a matter is but half thought through. We all suffer from the difficulty of compassing eternities with terms of time and space. Speech is inadequate to experience; more particularly administrators are too often impatient of deep thought. Much current Christology seems to be definitely at variance with the New Testament experience of Christ. The Church has strayed from the Way, and her experience is not what it was; or rather, is not understood as it was then understood. For here again we have to note the contrast between the life experience of individual Christians and the corporate expression of it by Church authorities.

Let us consider, first, theology within the Church; then secondly, theology outside the Church: both very briefly.

Within the organized Church, much current theology has hardened into a scheme of Christ's movements which seems to involve ideas about Ascension, Pentecost and Advent at variance with the Church's fundamental faith. Let us look at each of these three doctrines, first from the New Testament and secondly from our modern standpoint.

*The Ascension* is popularly supposed to convey the idea that *Christ departed.*

(1) A person unfamiliar with the Gospels might infer from many sermons and hymns that the Gospels give concurrent testimony to the Ascension as an external event involving Christ's departure. In fact, St. Luke alone thus records it: and he ends his Gospel with the disciples' joy and begins the Acts with a reference back to the Gospel as recording what Jesus *began* to do and teach. Moreover, he associates with his story of seeming departure a promise of return, which was speedily fulfilled at Pentecost and verified throughout his narrative.

The first Gospel ends with the assurance of Christ's perpetual presence. The appendix to St. Mark (xvi. ver. 19), mentions the Ascension as an article of faith rather than as a temporal and local event, and connects it with the statement that the Lord continued to work with the disciples everywhere; it is not a fact of departure, but a condition of power, that is here asserted. The fourth Gospel gives no place to any idea of Christ's separation from men.

To none of the Gospel writers did the "taking up" involve an end of Christ's personal presence with His disciples.

(2) Nowadays we all understand that heaven is not a place. "Taken up to heaven" is a symbol of

spiritual process. It involves the end of *seeing*, the beginning of a more intimate, less contingent association. "As long as our purpose depends for its vitality on any circumstance, though that circumstance be the Son of God Himself, it may be affected by a change of circumstance. Only when a man's purpose is firmly fixed apart from any regard to any circumstances will it be sure to stand unmoved by all chances and changes. So long as the disciples' devotion was governed by Christ visibly present in the flesh it was unstable; another visible presence could shake it. Only when Christ returned to dwell in them by His Spirit—only when their whole minds and wills were become moulded in the fashion of Christ's, only then was their spiritual life secure. And we have to ask ourselves, which stage of the spiritual life are we now in? Is Christ for us an attractive and impressive Figure who lived in Palestine two thousand years ago, and left an ideal of religious and moral conduct which we intend, if possible, to follow? or is He an abiding Presence in our hearts and wills, moulding our purpose and controlling our impulses? Is He a mere example or an inspiring influence? Is He for us a dead Man, or the living God?" (W. Temple, *Repton School Sermons*, p. 126).

"When the mortality of Christ was finally conquered, He delocalized His presence, not to decrease, but on the contrary to intensify it, to make possible a new and inclusive localization. The Christ spirit represents not a lesser but a greater, not a contracted, but an expanded, self-personification or personalization. The more spiritual a personality becomes, the more intensely real it grows to be, and so the more widely and deeply available. His presence becomes

an atmosphere and influence, without losing its transcendent completeness in the luxuriance of its increased immanence. The presence of the Paraclete took the place of the localized Christ not as a bare substitute but as that which constitutes a superior presence, including all that it held formerly and adding greatness to greatness, riches to wealth. In going Christ came in a fulness which was wanting before He went, the fulness of added availability, a higher degree of presence" (Bishop Brent, *Presence,* pp. 39, 40, and passim. Cf. also Swete, *The Ascended Christ,* passim).

*Pentecost* similarly is popularly regarded as the coming of *another than Christ.*

(1) The one passage in the New Testament suggestive of this idea of a substitute, giving Christ's words: "I will send you another Comforter," contains also His promise: "I come unto you." The supposed separation of the Spirit from Christ is alien to the thought of the New Testament (cf. Rom. viii. 9–11).

(2) The idea is philosophically intolerable. It is but a crude outcome of our human separateness, which allows us to speak of Spirit acting apart from Person, or of Christ being "impersonally present." "We know that the Son of God has come" (1 John v.) is the New Testament verdict, backed by Christian experience through the ages

*Advent* teaching likewise commonly emphasizes the idea that *the Church has to wait for Christ*

(1) The Gospel conviction of the early return of Christ, within that generation, has been already spoken of (see chap. II, above). But as it is now assumed that He did not return, theologians have to discuss this mistake of the early Church, and even of Christ Him-

self.[1] This early error, with its sequel of disillusionment, has become such a commonplace in theology that it is often taken as a *datum* for fixing the dates of the Gospels. Is there any evidence of this tremendous experience of disillusionment on the part of the early Church in regard to this central item of its faith? Is not the central fact of the early Church its experience of the *truth* of God, its absolute confidence in Christ ratified in every trial, the victory of its faith over the world? (cf. above, chap. III).

(2) The Church in allowing itself to suppose that it has to wait for Christ is applying to itself teaching that properly applies to the world, i.e., to human society organized in ignorance of Him. It is attributing to God the deficiencies of men. It is true that "the whole world lieth in the evil one"; i.e., Christ has not yet come to them for judgment and deliverance. But "we *know that the Son of God is come,* and hath given us an understanding, that we know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal Life." Therefore any other form of worship than that of the present Christ, in whom we are, is idolatry. "My little children, guard yourselves from idols" (conclusion of 1 John). It is putting fancies in place of fact. Certainly there is a waiting for Christ to come; but certainly there is also, and primarily, the fact of His having come and being with us for ever. And it is only by knowledge of His having already come to us that we can have any faith in His future coming to the world.[2] Just so far as the Church loses faith in His Presence, she loses power of

[1] Cf. e.g., such passages as Matthew x. 23, xvi. 28, xxiv. 34.
[2] Cf. Walpole, *Vital Religion,* conclusion.

proclaiming His coming. The present worldliness and powerlessness of the Church are due to her putting herself in the place of the world, waiting for Christ to come. The *reductio ad absurdum* of this type of theology is given in a hymn much used:

> "And so the holy Church is here
> Although her Lord is gone."

Absentee theology reflects lack of experience of Christ, and promotes thought of Him as a historic figure of the past. We turn then now to a brief glance at theological writers outside the organized Church. For first we have the Church apart from Christ, and then, as a natural sequel, the study of Christ apart from the Church. The Church's credal assertions of Christ's divinity are of no avail against the testimony of her life. The evidence of the Church's divisions, and inadequacy in face of modern conditions, affords strong presumption to the outsider that she has not in fact found in Christ the Person and the Power of God. I take as typical of a mass of theological writing the following words of Professor Moore (Professor of Theology in Harvard University) in *Christian Thought since Kant*: "There are two religious views of the person of Christ which have stood from the beginning, the one over against the other. The one saw in Jesus of Nazareth a man, distinguished by his special calling as the Messianic king, endued with special powers, lifted above all men ever known, yet a man, completely subject to God in faith, obedience and prayer. This view is surely sustained by many of Jesus' own words and deeds. It shines through the testimony of the men who followed Him. Even the belief in His resurrection and His second coming did not altogether do away with it. The other view saw in Him a new God

who, descending from God, brought mysterious powers for the redemption of mankind into the world, and after short obscuring of His glory, returned to the abode of God, where He had been before. From this belief come all the prayers to Jesus as to God, all miracles and exorcisms in His Name " (p. 147). " The problem of theological reflexion was to find the right middle course, to keep the divine Christ in harmony, on the one side, with monotheism, and on the other, with the picture which the Gospels gave. Belief knew nothing of these contradictions. The same simple soul thanked God for Jesus and His sorrows and His sympathy, as man's Guide and Helper, and again prayed to Jesus because He seemed too wonderful to be a man. The same kind of faith achieves the same wondering and touching combination to-day, after two thousand years. With thought comes trouble. Reflexion wears itself out upon the insoluble difficulty, the impossible combination, the flat contradiction, which the two views present, so soon as they are clearly seen " (p. 148).

With all of us our mental standpoint is (or should be) the outcome of our experience. If therefore it is the case, as it seems to be, that God is not united with man in the Christian world to-day, as He was once, as we hope He will be soon, it need not appear strange that thinkers find it hard to believe that God and man were ever one. We even acquiesce in that curious phenomenon of modern thought that belief in the divinity of Christ has been associated with conservatism and traditionalism, and commonly repudiated by so-called liberal thinkers. The refutation of the so-called " liberal " view of Christ has been effected not so much by any evidence of the Church's

triumphant life to-day as by the further processes of that same liberal research. The Church of the present does not afford the irrefutable evidence afforded by the Church of the past. It is then a momentous fact for us that liberal research has discovered for itself that lower views of Christ are untenable. Though they are still loudly proclaimed in some quarters, as in the passage quoted above, they are already disposed of. Critical thought is thus presenting a new challenge to the Church: if Christ cannot be set down as a mere man, can the Church show that He is God?

In this view of the results of criticism I base myself on Professor Loofs' work, *What is the Truth about Jesus Christ*;[1] and I hope that it is not beside our point to dwell a little on that excellent conspectus of the course of critical thought during the past century. Men have been very busy about Christ, and we ought to know the outcome of their thinking. Loofs, as it were, leads us out of the maze and shows that there is an outcome of all this multitudinous speculation and research. He shows that there were two main lines of attack on the thought that Jesus was God. The first was "that Jesus was only a deity, falsely changed into a man by tradition"; i.e., that He was an imaginary being, that never really existed. This view now claims little attention, having been destroyed by the process of thought, being "simply disproved by what we know for certain about Jesus from St. Paul." The second and more important view was that Jesus was only a man, this being "the assumption necessary for historical science." But now this

[1] *Lectures at Oberlin*. By Friedrich Loofs, Professor of Church History in the University of Halle (T. and T. Clark, 1913).

view " cannot prevail before the tribunal of historical science itself, because it does not do justice to the sources and is not tenable in itself." [1] " Science has to respect realities, and it is a reality that the faith in Jesus the Saviour has been a power in history, and still is a power in the world up to the present day. Historical science cannot do justice to the sources with its assumption that the life of Jesus was a purely human life. It cannot draw a credible picture of Jesus. . . . The presupposition that this life was a purely human life . . . is false " (pp. 159, 160).

But Loofs is at pains to show that this conclusion does not lead him to accept the " orthodox " belief in the Divinity of Christ. " The conviction that God dwelt so perfectly in Jesus through His Spirit, as had never been the case before and never will be till the end of all time, does justice to what we know historically about Jesus, and may, at the same time, be regarded as satisfactorily expressing the unique position of Jesus which is a certainty to faith. It also justifies our finding God in Christ when we pray to Him. . . .

[1] " It is bound either to come into such a skeptical attitude towards the sources that it is forced to give up all hope of obtaining a picture of the person and the activity of Christ—and that is not in harmony with our most definite knowledge, viz., that there existed a community shortly after the death of Jesus which revered him very highly and must have taken a lively interest in his words and deeds. Or, if it puts more confidence in the sources, Jesus and his deeds and his experiences must seem to exceed the ordinary human measure so far that the only possible frame for his self-consciousness must be found in a highly exaggerated Messianic consciousness of majesty, which no longer agrees with normal human life. Then Jesus appears as a religious enthusiast, and it seems natural to ask whether he was psychologically sound. But such a view does not agree with the deepest and greatest, and therefore certainly most genuine, words of Jesus which we have in the Gospels " (pp. 120, 121).

My last refuge, therefore, is the term which Paul strongly emphasizes in the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians, *the mystery of Christ.* And what is this mystery? God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, that is the mystery. It would be attempting impossible things if we tried to understand the historical person of Christ" (pp. 239, 240).

"My last refuge," says Professor Loofs; and, if I may say so, the phrase seems to me to betray the fundamental attitude of the main body of that modern critical and philosophical thought which does not accept belief in the Divinity of Christ. It is essentially an attitude of flight. It is flight on the one hand from "orthodoxy" and "ecclesiastical interpretations"; and we cannot deny that orthodoxy, or its exposition in organized Christianity, scares away many honest and true souls. The Church does not now exhibit that original light spoken of in St. John iii. 19–21, that so sifts men that every one that doeth ill hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest that they have been wrought of God.

On the other hand this attitude of flight does often involve a moral failure in the fugitive. The Cross is still foolishness to the Greeks. There is still that fundamental difficulty for human thought of seeing in the Crucified the ultimate truth of God; the difficulty that lies in taking up my cross and following Him: my native repugnance to such an ideal of life.

To return for a moment to Professor Loofs' most valuable summary of the results of critical study of the facts of Christ, we see that historical science has found itself unable to arrive at any tenable view of

Christ. Professor Loofs himself, has hardly found a satisfactory way of escape. If he could dismiss from his mind the fear of irrational "orthodoxy," and stand and face steadily that "mystery" which St. Paul emphasizes, he would surely admit that to St. Paul the most prominent aspect of the mystery was the mystery of "Christ in you" (Col. i. 27): not the fact of the past, that God *was* in Christ, but the fact of the present that Christ *is* in you and you *are* in Christ. But this conception takes us out of the plane of historical event on to the plane of eternal truth. And although Loofs, as we have seen, fully realizes the failure of liberal criticism to confine Christ within the categories of historical science, he shrinks from that passage to the eternal which those take who acknowledge Christ as God, and like Arius of old prefers to take refuge in semi-divinity.

Absentee Christology reduces Christian thought to confusion. It muddles the testimony of the New Testament, partly by applying to the end of the world Christ's teaching about return after His death, partly by assuming that express promises of speedy return were unfulfilled. But far more serious is the fact that it muddles life. We need but briefly mention three outstanding features of the muddle of modern Christendom :—

(*a*) The ecclesiastical muddle. Divided Christendom is denial of Christ. We have traditions of the past instead of facts of the present.

(*b*) The social muddle. In the supposed absence of Christ His revelation of God is not really accepted by Christians. Other facts than Christ are declared to be fundamental to human nature. It is assumed that you will only get the best out of children, or out

of adults, by setting them against one another, each for himself. So the Church has allowed the whole social order to be based on competition, not co-operation: on self, not on Christ. Hence war between Christian nations.

(*c*) The personal muddle. We need but ask ourselves: Are we, and our families, so living in Christ that all things in peace and order move, and there is immediate remedy for misunderstandings and frictions? Christians sometimes say that "in God's own good time" they will be reconciled (meantime they will not). The faith in Christ present is thus muddled with the idea of His temporary absence. We lack that sense of presence of the eternal, of presence *in* the eternal which St. Paul expressed in the phrase "in Christ," and which is the burden of St. John's Epistle and of the whole New Testament.

We need to repent of this habit of putting God away from us. The Son of God was manifested on purpose to end this aloofness: Emmanuel, God with us. Vital religion consists in acknowledging the presence of Christ. By thus knowing Him I have eternal life. Eternal truths become my personal possession. In religion, to individualize is to eternalize. I and God, the individual and the eternal, are brought together.

Here lies the secret of the vital force possessed by each of the opposing religious parties. "Catholics" know that they have an impregnable position as to the reality of sacramental grace; for every real Christian among them knows that by these sacraments he is here and now linked to the eternal God; he rightly repudiates any idea of them as mere memorials of the past. "Evangelicals" know that the Bible is the Word of God, because by it He actually has spoken

and does speak to them personally ; every real Christian among them rightly refuses to let questions of historical criticism take the place of this personal contact with the living God.

The personal contact with God and Christ is sure enough : it is the corporate expression of it that is so fatuous. But then the corporate expression re-acts on our individual faith ; our outlook is blurred, our mind muddled. We need to return to God, to put us all straight. And in God we shall get the final answer to our question ; for in God we shall find Christ. This, then, is the next point in our discussion.

## CHAPTER V

## CHRIST IN GOD

THIS book is addressed to Christians, who believe in God and in Christ. We know God, His being, His nature, His power, as revealed to us by Christ. We know Christ as the universal human ideal, to which both the individual and society are to grow up. In Him both the individual and the corporate personality are to find completion. Christ is Personality. Is He not ? (Eph. iv. 12–16).

Violence then is anti-Christ : " violence " in the sense of brute force, external force which ignores the inner facts and meanings of personality. For the ignoring of personality is the antithesis of love. Some attribute violence to Christ, e.g., in the cleansing of the temple ; but we can see that this so-called violence on His part was not such as to crush or injure personality. Violence, ignoring personality, is anti-Christ ; for it is misuse and misrepresentation of the power of God, and misuse and mutilation of the capacities of men.

But in our loss of the sense of the presence of Christ we habitually attribute violence to God. " The act of God " stands as the technical term for the loss of property at sea, by fire or storm. Though in our language of devotion we adhere to true religious faith

in the all-embracing love of God, from which nothing can separate us, yet in our everyday language we commonly adopt and hear a very different note, about the common accidents (as we regard them) of life, about the weather, about sickness. So it comes about that tragedies such as the Italian earthquakes have formed some of the hardest problems for the faith of the modern man. In a world of blind destructive forces, where and what is God? where and what is Christ?

The trouble is that whatever our individual faith may be, we corporately have lost the essential Christian view of the world. It often seems that our faith is not really monotheistic, or at least that we do not understand the application of monotheism to the facts of life. Some of us indeed have been impressed by teachers like James Hinton, who as a man of science ably maintained that the apparent inertness of nature is really our inertness; that what we regard as nature's deadness crushing our life is really our deadness clashing with nature's life (see e.g. his *Man and his Dwelling-Place,* passim). But our dull agnosticism persists, in spite of the repeated testimony of modern scientists to the unity of the universe in the laws and the love of God. To quote the writer of a paper for the Pan-Anglican Congress (G. F. C. Searle, F.R.S., in vol. iii. of the Report) on *The Modern Conception of the Universe*: "The unity of the universe makes it impossible to suppose that we can ever cut ourselves off from the operations of those laws. Did we but realize this, we should covet earnestly the spirit of holy fear. When men have this spirit they not only pay reverent attention to spiritual things, but also think and speak reverently of all the things of the material world, as,

for example, of the weather. They are conscious that they are dwelling in the Temple of God, and it is the joy of their lives to give Him their worship and their obedience." Dr. A. W. Robinson [1] thus summarizes the present position of theological and scientific thought: "There is reason to hope that the bitterness of old controversies will not be revived, and that we have before us a time in which Theology and Science will co-operate and no longer conflict. With deepening insight it is becoming plainer than ever that the phenomena of life, and even of matter, are the expression of a more than physical force. Evolution is a law under which a forward process is moving on, and moving up. There is an impulse of consciousness working from within, and there is a spiritual, as well as a material, environment inviting to correspondence with itself. Freedom and power of choice are admitted to be present in regions where their existence was for long most strenuously denied. Even matter may have its own power of insistence and resistance—how much more mind and will. This consideration may give us a yet clearer clue to the mysteries of failure, miscarriage and waste. A world that was to produce self-conscious, self-determining personalities needed to have freedom through the whole of its development; and the consequent risk and possible cost were inevitable. Shall we not be led to admire and revere increasingly the wonder of it all, as there grows upon us the sense of the quietness and gentleness, the foresight and the infinite patience of the Being of beings, who will never obtrude His presence and action upon us, just because He would help us to be our own, not dead

[1] *God and the World: A Survey of Thought*, pp. 104-5. S.P.C.K., 1914.

but living, selves, and would have us rise with Him to the highest things." So Tennyson :—

"Dark is the world to thee : thyself art the reason why ;
For is He not all but that which has power to feel 'I am I?'
Glory about thee, without thee ; and thou fulfillest thy doom
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendour and gloom.
Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet." [1]

The fact that in our ordinary thinking and writing we have so lost the romance of monotheism accounts in part for eager welcome given to *Gitanjali* and other books by Rabindranath Tagore. For he is one who dares to commune and have fun with God in the facts of life.[2]

" The quietness and gentleness, the foresight and the infinite patience " of God. So say scientists and poets, and so says every soul that knows Him. And yet we allow ourselves to be fooled by the hallucination that He is violent. We indulge in slipshod newspaper views ; in accounts of earthquakes and the like, allowing our attention to be fixed on this apparent violence of circumstances viewed externally, and not on the personal attitude and condition of the individuals affected,—not, that is, on the presence or absence of

[1] Tennyson, " The Higher Pantheism."

[2] Much of the charm of R. L. Stevenson, too, is of the same kind. Cf. especially his well-known lines, " The Celestial Surgeon," in *Underwoods*, beginning :

" If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness."

Christ in their field of consciousness; not on their understanding or misunderstanding of the whole affair. It was indeed not necessary to wait for modern scientists and poets to reveal to us the true character of the universe. For, as we have seen, it was to events of this kind that Christ specially referred in His so-called eschatological discourses, declaring the transformation, the transvaluation of them by His presence. To one therefore who accepts Christ's view of things our modern newspaper view is a hopeless misreading of events, presenting insoluble difficulties to faith: being an attempt to understand the world apart from Christ. It might be supposed that a Christian was one who, by reflection or experience or both, had been led to give up that attempt as futile, having learned indeed that "in Him all things consist." But as a matter of fact the normal level of conversation and of thought, in the Church or out of it, is to regard the events of the world, to describe them, see and feel them, as external catastrophes, not as internal personal experiences of the infinite love of God. In other words, our minds are out of tune with God. If we were in tune with Him, either these things would not happen, because we should know enough of His laws to prevent them; or if they happened, they would take on an utterly different aspect and character, being treated from the personal and not the impersonal point of view. Throughout this book I am trying to keep close to the actual facts of life, and therefore of my own life among others. So here perhaps I may illustrate from individual experience these two points about catastrophes, their prevention and their interpretation. Here in the interior of China my "parish" is constantly suffering from floods, caused by a river

breaking its banks and making new courses across the country year after year; and the people sit by and starve, seeing no means of coping with this devastating force. We coming from the West know that the trouble is not inevitable; that if the people or their government had enough of the spirit of love to make them able to work together for the common good, there is engineering knowledge and skill adequate for preventive measures. The catastrophes could be avoided by men coming more in tune with God. And as to the transmutation of external catastrophe by internal realization of God, I can myself but testify what thousands in this war can testify from far wider experience: having been under fire from Chinese looting soldiers, with my friend shot dead at my side, I could grieve neither for him nor for myself, and friends who wrote about the "awful experience," "too dreadful for words," did not tally with one's own sense of what happened. They only had the newspaper account; I had the experience. This is the difference happening all the time between the external view of events and the internal experience of life. And every Christian has this knowledge to himself, but generally forsakes it when he forms his ideas of things from newspapers or enters into conversation with others in the terms of current speech. This knowledge is a knowledge of the meaning of the universe.[1] It is more than knowing the facts; it is knowing their meaning, both what they mean to me and what they mean to God (for I can only understand them in proportion as I share God's view of them). For within God's facts there is a meaning, an answer, a response. And that eternal answer to God, the

[1] 1 John v. 20; Eph. i. 9, 10.

eternal meaning of His universe, is Christ. Christ is within God, His working within God's working. He on the page of history is the answer of human life to God who made it: He is the meaning of life. He is historically the revelation of the meaning of God, of God within God, of the possibility and fact of the Cross within the Divine action, and within the Divine Being. So He becomes to men the interpretation of the ways of God. To know Christ is to understand God.[1] In that understanding man recognizes a personal Divine meaning to himself in all that is and in all that happens, and recognizes too an individual claim on himself for certain action within the general scheme of things, a claim that he too should make response, have meaning, to God. So we may analyse belief in Christ as involving (*a*) emotional embrace of this Interpretation of the meaning of things; (*b*) identification of will with His Will now recognized as operative in and through the whole system of the universe. So St. Paul spoke of "the God Whose I

[1] *Christ as the Meaning.* The following simple propositions seem true, and expressive of this idea:—

He is the meaning of man—to God and to himself.
He is the meaning of each of us—what we are for.
He is the meaning of the universe—what it is for.
He is thus the answer to God.
In each of us He is our answer to God.
We in Him make corporate response to God.
A man in Christ makes perfect response to environment.
The Church in Christ is wholly adjusted to the action of God.

It is important to remember that all such abstract statements about Christ are based upon personal experience of Him. Apart from personal religion they are meaningless. But if in fact He is my God, I must in some such terms express my view of life.

Only believe, and thou shalt see
That Christ is all in all to thee.

am, Whom also I serve." We both love and serve. Is it true of us, of you and of me? Do we both love and serve? and that not departmentally but universally? Too often it seems that we live our lives, or at least we think our thoughts, departmentally. In our worship or in our creeds, for instance, how much do we think of the facts of God's evolutionary procedure which are so familiar to our thought at other times? Except when we are specifically concerned with Christian Apologetics, do we moderns really find God and Christ central in our ideas of science, and of art and of history? The word "God" seems to have been eviscerated of meaning in modern literature and modern conversation. The Practice of the Presence of God is what we are all needing, what the whole world is needing: why has it been relegated to little books and little times of devotion? The Cross of Christ gives us the meaning of the universe. We want a devotional grasp of the whole situation, not merely of individual forgiveness. Let us pause before the Fact of the Cross, which is Jesus Christ, our God.

"God puts His world before you, and it is yours to make of it what you will. It is there. The trees of the garden in which you live may be much or may be little to you; they may be everything or nothing. But they are there. And then here stands this other fact, a fact still; it is there. Truth holds the door open for the future. You see, there is something more there than any of our theologies. As Rendel Harris once said to me—we were talking of Clement of Alexandria—'No one sings, "How sweet the name of Logos sounds."' You cannot. It is not He, do you see? But there is He, and there is He dying. The fact stands, and will stand: the great fact standing

out for you and me, to judge ourselves by, to make what we can of, and to be re-made by it. At any rate, there it is; beyond all theologies, beyond all dogma—the fact of the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross. And it is for you to settle with yourself and with God, by Whose Will it was there and you are here, what you make of it. What will you make of it? What will it make of you?" [1]

It has hitherto made so little of us, so little of the Church, so little of the world, because we have been making so little of it. "Remember, whatever you make of Christ and His death, past, present and future, are one story—it is, 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to-day and for ever,' and whatever He has been to those to whom He was most, He may be again to you and me—and more yet, beyond our thinking." [2]

A man in Christ will understand God and what God does. That understanding puts an end to individual isolation: each comes to himself as a social being, linked to all his fellows, partaker in the one Life. In Christ we are members one of another, because we have come into line with the workings of God, who works in us mightily; we are conformed to the laws of nature. Therefore in Christ, in the absolute society that is in Him, all human faculties have opportunity of fullest development. "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." "I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything ye were enriched in Him, in all utterance and in all knowledge." "In Him all the treasures of wisdom and

[1] T. R. Glover, in *Christ and Human Need* (Addresses at Liverpool), Student Volunteer Missionary Union.
[2] Ibid.

knowledge lie hidden." Here are the proper riches of the Church.

Where then is Christ? Christ is in God. His presence to us means the same as, yet more than, the presence of God. For it means the answer of God to Himself; the world or the man no longer worked *by* God only, but working *with* Him voluntarily. To that presence men and women attained who gave themselves up to love: such is the testimony of the New Testament, of those who first knew Christ in Palestine, and afterwards knew Him in God: and such is the history of the Church through the ages.

That real history of the Church has not been and perhaps cannot be written. It lies not in the events and actions viewed externally, but in their inner meaning to the actors and sufferers: not in circumstances, but in the life that is hid with Christ in God. That is what entitles it to be called the Divine Society. That alone accounts for its continuance till now, in spite of all its sins and blunders in the past, in spite of all the inadequacies and muddles of which we are conscious in the present.

The Church still exists: but its life is enfeebled, because we have so largely put God away from us. We have misunderstood God. We have neither shaped our minds nor tuned our lips to Immanent and Transcendent Love.

Only as we priests and ministers of the Living God return to Him can we or the Church or the world be saved. For it is we who are obviously responsible before God and man for the corporate expression of religion, and for its inadequacy over against the adequacy of personal experience of Christ.

Misunderstanding of God is bound up with mis-

understanding of men. Misreading the divine nature we misread human nature. Failing to see Christ in God, we fail to acknowledge and adore Him in all His members. Hence the disunion of Christendom, our failure of love. "He who does not love, does not know God, for God is love."

## CHAPTER VI

# THE VALIDITY OF SECTIONAL EXPERIENCE

WE Christians all know that we ought to love one another. By baptism, by profession, we too, like those first Christians, have given ourselves up to love. Our trouble, the tragedy of Christendom, is that in seeking to obey the Christ Who gave us this commandment, in trying to be true to our profession, we find ourselves ranged in mutually opposed sections, between whom the love felt is little and the love shown even less. We Christians are all (or most of us) so sure of our own position that we cannot allow ourselves to suppose that another position held by other people may be equally right. We have all been schooled in particular doctrines as to the essential means of grace, and the fundamental conditions of membership in the Church ; and more than that, we all know in our own experience that our own way is right, efficacious, proved by the working of God in our own lives and in the lives of others whom we reach and teach. If not, we can hardly be Christians.

We taste Thee, O Thou Living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still ;
We drink of Thee, the Fountain-head,
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill.

Here may Thy faithful people know
The blessings of Thy love,
The streams that through the desert flow,
The manna from above.

"Thou dost assure us thereby of Thy favour and goodness towards us, and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical Body of Thy Son."

From childhood up, as communicant, as deacon, priest, latterly as missionary, all I am and know and do as a Christian I owe to my membership in the Church of England. My communion and my commission are only mine through the faith and ordinances of this Church. Until I came out as a missionary to China I had personal acquaintance with hardly any member of any other religious body.

But an eye-opening experience comes to many a man and woman sent out by this or that Church to propagate the faith in a heathen land. We are for the first time brought face to face in close association with men and women of other denominations. In the direct conflict with the elemental forces of evil and ignorance the fundamental attitude towards life is the one thing that matters. Association in great enterprises, demanding the utmost that manhood and womanhood can be and give, reveals Christ in a new and stronger light. The war has been serving in the same way to bring members of different Churches, now united in a new fellowship of service and sacrifice, into this new attitude of mutual affection, and respect for each other's religious convictions and practices. The sense deepens that ours is not the only way to God; that other ways are valid too, in that they are in fact what they profess to be, effectual means of grace.

This indeed has long been recognized by our best

teachers. For example, Bishop Woodford, in an address on "The Power of Absolution," quotes Bishop Andrewes: "*Gratia Dei non alligatur mediis*; the grace of God is not bound, but free; and can work without means of Word or Sacrament: and as without means, so without Ministers, how and when to Him seemeth good"; and he continues, "All that is meant is that here is a Divinely appointed channel for conveying God's pardon, and they who place themselves under it may be sure of receiving what they look for." [1] That God is not bound to His own laws is a familiar but unfortunate way of expressing this truth that there are facts of God outside our scheme. God is not tied, but we are. Why are we not free to come into line with God? Where is that freedom with which originally Christ set free His Church? [2]

But here comes in another part of the tragedy of Church History. Many a man or company of men, moved by dissatisfaction with the sectional position of their religious life contrasted with the catholic meaning of their faith, and seeking to move out into a wider unity of Christians, has ended informing one more sect. History seems to show that progress to catholic unity cannot be made by breaking away from one's own spiritual inheritance. And the same conclusion would follow from viewing Christianity as the religion of loyalty: loyalty will not grow out of disloyalty.

The desire and hope for Christian Re-union grows from year to year, and as all roads seem blocked at home, it has become a commonplace in discussions of the subject to suggest that the desired lead will

[1] *The Great Commission: Addresses on the Ordinal.* By J. R. Woodford, Bishop of Ely (Rivingtons, 1886).

[2] Gal. ii. 4 and v. 1.

come from the Mission Field. Unfortunately this pious hope has hardly yet led to corresponding action by the home authorities; for it is a too familiar fact on the mission field that the missions are not free to move in the direction suggested, but are more or less rigidly controlled by the home boards. Our Anglican missions in particular are restrained by the duty of loyalty to the whole Anglican Communion, which allows no local section to advance independently towards fellowship with other kinds of Christians.[1]

To expedite human action along the lines of God's working, we need knowledge of the actual facts, and not only knowledge but such acknowledgment of them that they become formative of our thoughts and determinative of our acts. By recognition of facts we escape from the bondage and powerlessness of our own preconceptions. It is thus that modern science, and still more the modern scientific habit of mind, is the great means of progress in every department of life.

[1] Yet on the mission field it seems strange to read such a pronouncement as the following, quoted in a Church paper under the heading "An S.P.G. Boycott," made by a London vicar :—

"I have postponed making a statement as to the practical bearing of the 'Kikuyu' pronouncement of the Archbishop of Canterbury on our collections for foreign Missions, in the hope that the S.P.G. might be able to give assurances that its funds would not be distributed to Dioceses where separatists are being admitted to our pulpits and Altars in defiance of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England. So far the Society has declined to give assurances. It asks us to tell our friends that it sympathizes with their anxieties and begs us to be content with the expression of this friendly sentiment. But we are not content. Until S.P.G. is able to make its position quite clear we shall suspend our annual collection for its funds, and there will be no Association in support of S.P.G. connected with All Saints."

Many of us who have had some training in science or philosophy before taking up theology have been troubled by the realization that the latter has not hitherto fully shared in that liberation of human thought from its own entanglements which has led to all the advancement of learning in other departments since the time of Bacon's *Novum Organum*. Archbishop Temple, in 1857, wrote: "Our theology has been cast in a scholastic mould, i.e., all based on logic. We are in need of and are gradually being forced into a theology based on psychology. The transition, I fear, will not be without much pain; but nothing can prevent it." [1]

"O my God, I am thinking Thy thoughts after Thee," said Kepler, as he traced the wonders of God's working in the stars. Surely not less should this be our acknowledgment as we trace His working in the minds of His children. But unfortunately the self-centredness incidental to most religion other than that of the living present Christ has till now hindered an unprejudiced study of religious facts, even by Christians. Unless we each of us hold to faith in Christ present we relapse into the exclusiveness of Judaism, hugging our links with the past that mark us off from other men. We remain busy with the tombs of the prophets. We study and we teach what Christ was and did for our predecessors, rather than what He is and does for our contemporaries. We hold to what He said then, and hardly expect to hear Him say anything fresh to-day. The Word of God that the prophets heard we read in books. The very phrase

[1] *Memoirs* ii., p. 517. Quoted by his son in *Foundations*, p. 226, and also by Bishop Brent in *Leadership*, p. 257.

" the Word of God," becomes technicalized and limited to the record of His words to the Jews. In our Chinese translation of the Prayer Book, for example, the prayer that Christians " may agree in the truth of Thy holy Word," which at least is capable of a wider meaning, becomes a prayer that they may acknowledge the truth of the Bible. Thus miracles and prophecy and gifts of healing and other gifts of the Spirit we are disposed to relegate to the distant past: we know little or nothing of such wonders now. For we know so little about the presence of Christ in the " beloved community." Bishop Walpole, in *Life's Chance*, remarks that in these modern days of advancing science " the knowledge of love has not kept pace with the knowledge of the world." Similarly Bishop Brent: " Human greatness only begins to express itself in that creative power which, in recent years, has rejoiced inordinately in its ability to invent or to organize matter. There is another sphere, as yet but slightly exploited, where work, equally creative though of a much more enduring character, is waiting for human operations—the sphere to which St. Paul refers when he says, ' We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.' We shall never be able to vision more than a fraction of what we may know and be, until we Christians learn as a body to practise eternity unremittingly and arduously." [1] " The Christian experience of to-day, if there be any truth in the indwelling of God's Spirit, is as worthy of respect in its bearing on theology as that of the first centuries. Early Christian theology was of necessity mainly psychological, with a moderate though sufficient regard for historicity as summed

[1] *Presence.* Bishop Brent, Longmans, 1914. P. 51.

up in the Hebraic past and for the essence of logic as embodied in current philosophies." [1]

The unreadiness of theology to accept the data of the present is bound up with ignorance of the facts of love. We do not know what love is doing in the world to-day; at least we know very little about it; the Church does not concentrate upon this topic; theologians do not make this their science. The facts of religious psychology, of the actual operations of the Spirit of God in the mind of man, are an almost unexplored field for most of us, at least in the sphere of Church polity.

It is true that of recent years there has been a beginning made in the scientific exploration and classification of the facts of religious experience. James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* stands out here. But it is noteworthy that his study was of abnormal types, and not of the everyday facts of the Christian life. A good deal of work in this direction has since been done; "psychology" becomes almost a shibboleth in writings on religious instruction. But the Church as a body, as an organized whole, is still unmoved. Her system and methods are not yet revised in accordance with our growing knowledge of the facts of love.[2]

[1] *Leadership*. Bishop Brent. P. 258.

[2] In this connection it seems worth noting that no adequate work seems yet to have been done in the field of social psychology, properly so called; i.e., in the study of the facts of corporate life. Some of us at least have for years been looking in vain for such books. The writings of Le Bon on "the Crowd" are too superficial to satisfy any who see in human society more than a crowd of individuals. McDougall's *Social Psychology*, in spite of its title, is still a study of individual life, in its social bearing indeed, but not of the corporate life of society. The Church still holds the secret of corporate

Let us indeed recognize that a science of psychology in any complete sense may be an impossibility. Modern philosophy and science will both lend support to the protest of religion against reducing the facts of life to the action of predetermined law. We are not mere examples of general principles. Individual initiative is conceded to beings much lower than man. "No mathematics could calculate the orbit of a common house-fly," says Sir Oliver Lodge.[1]

Nevertheless these are facts of life, and it is possible to review them impartially and arrange them systematically. This has been the proper work of the Church from the first. The law of forgiveness as declared in the words of absolution is a case in point: "He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe." There is therefore a fair field for religious psychology: a field in which the Fathers worked: a field now white unto harvest.

And there is a worker in this field, Baron von Hügel, whose work is of inestimable value for the solution of the present difficulty about the re-union of Christendom: the difficulty of combining loyalty to the past with freedom in the present. In his monumental work on the *Mystical Element in Religion* he has helped us to get deeper into the problem than most of us could get without him. He shows how religion essentially consists in three elements: the institutional, the rational and the mystical, corresponding broadly to the predominant instincts and interests of the three stages of human life, childhood, youth and manhood.

life: to her failure to divulge it is due this blank in our modern outlook.

[1] In Presidential Address to the British Association, 1913. Quoted in *God and the World*, by Dr. A. W. Robinson.

He speaks of "Sense and Memory, the Child's means of approaching Religion"; "Question and Argument, the Youth's mode of approaching Religion"; and "Intuition, Feeling and Volitional requirements and evidences, the Mature Man's special approaches to Faith." [1]

Every one in childhood accepts the facts of his own environment and of his own teachers as *the* facts. Not only his words, but his thoughts and his views, are for the most part taken over wholesale from them into his own inner life. He is interested in all the external organization and manners of his home, his school, his church; these are the facts that hold him. Only later comes the stage of questioning—not the child's superficial "why," but the youth's probing "why." Then things have to justify themselves to his reason; he must trace their causes and connections. This stage also passes for most of us in adult life; we pass from argument to action; we settle into the proved verdicts of experience: we are concerned with effecting results rather than with investigating causes. Life now contains many things that cannot be reduced to formulas.

Though the stages are distinguished, yet the three elements successively predominant are concurrent throughout life. Though one comes to the top, the others are below. Together they constitute our spiritual life. Von Hügel shows how these three elements go to make up all our mental activity. "At the very source of all our certainty, of the worth attributable to the least or greatest of our thoughts and

[1] In *The Threefold Strand of Belief* (Modern Oxford Tracts: Longmans, 6*d*. net). Dr. H. Scott Holland gives a clear view of these three elements of religion as analysed by Von Hügel.

feelings and acts, we already find the three elements: indubitable sensation, clear thought, warm faith in and through action."

The value of this kind of scientific analysis of religion is that it enables us to deal with facts instead of prejudices. The fact of supreme importance for our present discussion is that the denominational inheritance in which we have been brought up is our inalienable and ineradicable possession. We are likely to find ourselves fighting against God if we try to break away from it. We look down on God if we look down on others because their inheritance is different from our own. Von Hügel says: "This traditional element not all the religious genius in the world can ever escape or replace: it was there, surrounding and moulding the very pre-natal existence of each one of us; it will be there long after we have left the scene. We live and die its wise servants and stewards, or its blind slaves, or in futile, impoverishing revolt against it: we never, for good or for evil, really get beyond its reach." [1]

God would have each of us true to his own past, loyal to the community that has brought him up.

Modern science has thus brought us face to face with the same facts on a large scale that the early Church faced and obeyed on a small scale. "If God has given them exactly the same gift as He gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I—how could I try—to thwart God?" The Church then learned that fellowship was not to be limited to the holders of special Divinely-given privileges from the past. The present working of Christ then outweighed all tradition. To-day we are in

[1] Op. cit., vol. i., p. 59.

face of religious facts vaster than any that they could know. Can we equally obey? Can we similarly allow facts to transcend tradition?

Let us try to make this point a little clearer: for there is an apparent contradiction. On the one hand we say that the traditional element of religion is ineradicable, an essential part of each man's spiritual life. On the other hand we say that traditions must give way to present facts. The point lies in the distinction between God's tradition and man's tradition; between what God hands on from generation to generation in fact and life, and what man hands on in word and theory. The latter divides men into disputatious sects; the former unites men in reverence for the Father of all. For God's traditions are the facts of human life, or rather of the Divine life in men, the facts of the one Spirit "dividing to each man severally as He will."

We are faced with facts: as Christians we should rather say that we are faced with God. The denominational grounding is an essential factor of each man's religion, not because this may be proved from the Bible, nor because Church fathers and formularies have so declared, but because the living God does in fact so work in the lives and minds of His children. Mutual recognition thus becomes not an aloof toleration, but a humble and whole-hearted acknowledgment of God.

O come, let us worship and fall down,
And kneel before the Lord our Maker.

I will give thanks unto Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

Mutual recognition: the healing of the wounds of the Church: communion: the return of the Church to

the feet of God: the return of the Bride to Christ: with men it is all impossible, but not with God. Faithful is He that called us, who also will do it—if we but yield ourselves to Him.

Already many who believe in God are giving themselves to the accomplishment of this end. The preparations for the World Conference on Faith and Order have been proceeding steadily since 1910. "It is desired to invite every autonomous Communion which confesses our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour to appoint a Commission to co-operate in arranging for and conducting the World Conference. Fifty-five Commissions have now been appointed, representing almost every part of the world, and numerous invitations are pending. Notable letters have been received from Cardinal Gasparri expressing the deep interest of the Pope and himself in the movement and promising their prayers. Two of the leading magazines of the Russian Church have published articles by eminent theologians urging the co-operation of the Russian Church. Similar articles had been published before the war by Protestant reviews in Germany, Finland, Hungary, Norway and Sweden. . . . The letters received both before and since the outbreak of the war show a wide and increasing interest in the movement and a clearer recognition that nothing but the visible unity of the Church which is the Body of Christ will suffice to establish His law of peace" (Leaflet issued October, 1915).

The existence since 1913 of the *Constructive Quarterly*, a Journal of the Faith, Work and Thought of Christendom, is another sign of the times. Here leading thinkers of every Church give of their best in constructive statement of the convictions and experience

of their own communion. "The immediate purpose of the *Quarterly* is to induce a better understanding and a truer sense of fellowship. Its final hope is the unity of the Family of God in the Body of Christ, where the liberty of the children of God will be attained."

A French Roman Catholic writer in this *Quarterly* [1] reviews a recent work of Père Bainvel, a professor in the Catholic Institute of Paris, on *Outside the Church no Salvation,* which, he declares, exactly reflects the common teaching. All through, in fact, the distinguished professor incessantly leans upon declarations of the Sovereign Pontiff and the best theologians. The view of this representative Roman Catholic theologian is as follows: "While men necessarily halt at the exterior of things, and can judge only after appearances, the divine sight sees what is: it sees hearts, it sees souls. . . . For God, souls are what they are within, what they are by intimate disposition and by will. The outward act itself, while counting for much in His eyes, nevertheless counts only through the will and intention which animate it through whatever of heart and of soul is found in it. We understand then that to belong or not belong, by visible ties, by external communion to the Church of Christ is for Him a secondary matter, if we may so express it. The distinction of visible and invisible is valid only in relation to us; to Him, all is visible." The reviewer continues: "And this is why, in His eyes, they are already in the true Church of Christ, all those souls unknown to us whom circumstances stronger than their will keep far away from the ecclesiastical body, but who in reality are joined to it by the

[1] Jean Rivière, Professor in the Grand Seminaire, Albi; *Constructive Quarterly*, September, 1914.

imperceptible bonds of the heart. Thus may we, with our Fathers in the Faith, repeat the ancient formula: 'Outside the Church no salvation.' For we know that beyond the narrow boundaries of the society which in this world holds Christ's faithful in one group, there stretches the vaster and fairer Church of souls. The contemplation of this unity, which is withheld from our mortal view, will no doubt be one of the joys of the heavenly Fatherland. Meanwhile we can only hasten by our prayers and our exertions the day when that 'building of Christ's Body' shall be accomplished in which we shall all meet each other again 'in one and the same faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God,' where 'there shall be but one flock and one Shepherd.'"

"Underlying all our disunions," writes a Congregational Professor of Theology,[1] "there is not only a common Christian experience which is basal and binding, but also a body of common conviction, a vital doctrinal consensus far richer than has ever been recognized. The Church at large has been blind to its own unity. We have not seen the forest because of the trees, and the groves. The Church has failed to realize that underneath all its doctrinal outgrowths, feeding the roots even of its tangles and underbrush, is the inexhaustible soil of a common vital spiritual experience, out of which have grown certain great essential convictions which, the more firmly and vitally they are realized, the more surely will they draw us toward one another."

Mutual recognition is the keynote of all this new

[1] John Wright Buckham, D.D., Professor of Christian Theology in the Pacific Theological Seminary. *Constructive Quarterly*, December, 1915, p. 824.

movement in the Churches, a movement which is thus seen to be vitally connected with the whole course of progress of modern thought and life, in that it takes facts as facts and honours them as such. The Student Christian Movement is probably the most notable and potent embodiment of the ideal. The ideal of a dead uniformity is in itself nearly dead. The ideal of unity in diversity is what we are all after : only we still fail to arrive.

The present position of Christendom would be ridiculous if it were not so tragic. We have ceased to persecute one another. We read each other's books, and draw mental and spiritual light and strength from teachers of other denominations. We even actively co-operate in some few moral and social enterprises. In short, we know that we are fellow-Christians.

But the official Church—the Church as organized—cannot move : she is paralysed. In every proposal for conference or joint action there is the proviso that of course the several Churches are not committed to anything that may be done or decided. We unite in everything except the distinctive practices of our religion. Our Church systems make it seem that the nearer we get to Christ the further we get from one another. Which is absurd.

The children are come to the birth and there is not strength to bring them forth.

"Weep, dear Lord, above Thy bride low-lying ;
Thy tears shall wake her frozen limbs to life and health again."

In spite of all we know, the official Church remains powerless to move—until she comes under the direct control of Christ.

## CHAPTER VII

## THE WAY

'I AM the Way."

We know Him as the Way for ourselves as individuals. But we have not yet recognized Him as the Way for human society. Human society has lost its way; we do not know where we are going. Society has been compared to a rider on a runaway horse, named Civilization; we are all inordinately proud of the strength of our steed, and of his ever-increasing speed. But what is the good of speed if it has no goal, and if all peace is lost in the progress?

But the "Hound of Heaven" pursues mankind no less than He pursues the individual:

> Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
> With unperturbèd pace,
> Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
> And past those noisèd Feet
> A Voice comes yet more fleet—
> "Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me."

And so at last we begin to understand that our trouble is God's trouble, and our pain His. May we stop and think.

The root of the trouble is that the Church herself has lost the way, and therefore cannot lead mankind. Even at the oncoming of war she was speechless, she who is or was the Body of the Prince of Peace.

Christ is the Way : only He can bring us to God ; only He can bring Christendom into line with God. And He can do so only as Christendom recognizes Him and yields to Him : recognizes Him in God ; in every one as that which links or would link us together, taking us out of the little self into the larger self.

The Church has lost the way because she has forgotten how to grow up. For the way is the Way of Life ; and life involves growth. At the beginning she attained to a complete life, the records of which must remain a pattern and inspiration for us in our feeble second childhood of religion. She started growing up in all things unto Him, which is the Head, even Christ. But now her tragedy is arrested growth : she has stuck : she cannot get there. The world looks wonderingly at her vast powers, cabined and confined.

Now this arrest of growth in religion is a phenomenon whose causes and effects have become fairly obvious. What has happened ? The Church began with Christ. Men found in Him the fulfilment of past ideals, the attainment of present reality, the assurance of a complete future. But the Present was the dominant factor in their consciousness—the present Christ, Who never failed them. This is the essential mystical element of adult religion. So long as the Church retained the sense of Christ's presence and remained under His direct control, she knit in one rich life all those elements of religion which at other times have been sundered—the corporate loyalty, the intellectual vigour, the devotion of personal faith. Later, the Past eclipsed the Present. Christians ceased to cohere in Christ. Institutionalism prevailed, with rationalism ranged against it as hereditary foe.

This eclipse of the present is what always happens

if we lose or think we have lost our leader or lover. In the present blank we treasure the old words and cling to the old ways of doing things; the past is sacred; innovation is apt to look like sacrilege.

Christ founded the Church to save us from this pathetic malady. For understanding of this malady, this arrest of growth, we again draw help from Von Hügel's analysis of religion into the three elements: institutional, rational, mystical. The corporate Church no less than the individual Christian needs the co-ordination of all three religious forces. In Church history, as in individual life, the three elements of religion are present throughout; but only in the full-grown life are they properly co-ordinated. Except in the golden Apostolic Age we are apt to find each of them dominant at different stages of Church history: religion becomes one-sided, either as traditional, or as rationalist, or as subjective. The primary stage, corresponding to childhood of the individual, is that in which the Christian community goes on happily in entire satisfaction with its own ideas and its own methods and its own plans. It is intensely conservative, attaching Divine sanction to all it has inherited from the past. This is the stage of keen denominational life, in which the interests of the denomination are supreme, and its ordinances are regarded as of universal obligation. Throughout Christendom we are all familiar with these phenomena, and with this experience; with making such claim ourselves, and resenting it when made by others. This institutional element of religion is more particularly characteristic of Church officials and Church councils. We are aware of its action in ourselves in those capacities: there too often we are other men than when we kneel

alone with God, other men than we are in ordinary intercourse with our friends. It causes the characteristic weakness of episcopacy, which but for this lopsidedness might well be recognized by all as part of the Divine plan for Church order. A religion that makes a particular tradition determinative of its action prejudices to the modern mind its claim to Divine sanction. For to modern men as to the first Christians what is primary in religion is not the Then and There but the Now and Here of God's relation to men.

The secondary stage of Church life is that of intellectual and critical activity. This too is conspicuous in these days.[1] It is essentially individualist—each man following the truth whithersoever it seems to lead him: yet it becomes characteristic of a society of individualists (for they cannot be purely individualist). So we have that mass of theological criticism and speculation which owns no allegiance to the organized Christian community and cuts itself off from the traditions and authority of past thought. The Church thus seems for some time past to have been held up at the crisis which Von Hügel well describes as it occurs in the individual life: "The transition from the child's religion, so simply naïve and unconscious, so tied to time and place and particular persons and things, so predominantly traditional and historical, institutional and external, to the right and normal type of a young man's religion, is as necessary as it is perilous. The transition is necessary. For all the rest of him is growing—body and soul are growing in clamorous complexity in every direction: how then

[1] Cf. above, chap. IV.

can the deepest part of his nature, his religion, not require to grow and develop also?" (Von Hügel asks this question as to the individual youth: we can ask it likewise as regards Christian society), "and how can it permeate and purify all the rest, how can it remain and increasingly become 'the secret source of all his seeing,' of his productiveness and courage and unification, unless it continually equals and exceeds all other interests within the living man" (or society) "by its own persistent vitality, its rich and infinite variety, its subtle, ever-fresh attraction and inexhaustible resourcefulness and power? But the crisis is perilous. For he will be greatly tempted either to cling exclusively to his existing, all but simply institutional, external position, and to fight and elude all approaches to its reasoned, intellectual apprehension and systematization; and in this case his religion will tend to contract and shrivel up, and to become a something simply alongside of other things in his life. Or he will feel strongly pressed to let the individual intellect simply supplant the institutional, in which case his religion will grow hard and shallow, and will tend to disappear altogether." [1]

Look at Christendom to-day. Is not its condition correctly diagnosed in the passage thus quoted? Has not religion become "a something simply alongside of other things in our life"? Or over large tracts of "enlightened" society does it not "tend to disappear altogether"? It was an immature Church that had to face the oncoming of war: as a wondering child, or an argumentative youth, not the man full-grown in the stature of Christ.

[1] Vol. i., pp. 54, 55.

Christendom indeed is not merely the scene of conflict between institutionalism and rationalism, or of isolated development of one or the other of these elements. It contains much more than the assertive simplicity of childhood, or the crises and conflicts and dogmatism of youth ; it contains the religion of mature life. Everywhere are those who through the institution and through the reasoning have followed on to know the Lord. " Here religion is rather felt than seen or reasoned about, is loved and lived rather than analysed, is action and power, rather than either external fact or intellectual verification."

But it is individuals of Christendom that have reached this adult religion, not Christendom as an organized whole, not the Church or Churches as such. Christendom is full of grown-up Christians, but itself fails to grow up. This is the deepest tragedy of the present war. Christian men in all these nations through the very passion of their loyalty, through the utterness of their self-surrender, are ranged against one another. Because they are willing to die, they are obliged to kill. Because they are devoted to truth and honour, they are involved in breaches of the fundamental rules of even schoolboy honour. The horror of it all is voiced by writer after writer from the trenches, willing to go on in absolute self-sacrifice, but loathing the whole thing utterly.

Here again we are up against the contrast between personal religion and the corporate expression of it. Christianity as the religion of loyalty produces loyal men : but the Church has not shown them clearly what loyalty really is : and therefore loyalty, instead of uniting, divides. For in every part of human life, so long as we are content with superficial views, we

find ourselves mutually opposed; when we get to the deep views, we find ourselves at one. We attain to unity in diversity.

Loyalty in every land is a spiritual force attaching itself to material objects. We need but call to mind what the national flag means to us. The flag is a focus of all that attachment to the things of home and country. But behind the things lies the life that they embody and express, it is to that larger life that loyalty devotes our individual lesser lives. Many hold that loyalty attaches ultimately to the nation or the State. But we must remember that it takes other forms than that of patriotism. Before the war, parties and classes were taking the place of the nation, and men and women were throwing themselves into those narrower causes with hardly less devotion than they now give to the national cause. Many of us will remember our early loyalties to School or House, and our inability to feel that any rival attachment could be as good and real as ours. Loyalty, then, is an ultimate factor of our spiritual life—spiritual as transcending time and space. It belongs to the first of those three essential elements of religion, the institutional, the rational and the mystical. It binds us corporately to our institutions. But we must acknowledge that though an ultimate factor of religion it is not ultimate in its ordinary forms, as attached to this or that object, though at the time we think (or rather feel) that it is. There are many excellent instances of party transference, of religious transference, of naturalization. The man brought up in loyalty to one community lives later as a loyal member of another. This is to say that no State, no party, no Church, as standing in distinction or opposition to

another, has the ultimate claim to man's allegiance.[1] Only Christ has that. Christ alone is the absolute society. No other is catholic. The tragedy of Christians in this war is therefore due to the Church's overemphasis on the institutional side of religion : she has given men loyalty, but has not given them the present Christ to claim that loyalty. The Church has hitherto failed to present Christ as the ultimate Corporate Personality, to hold together all His members for ever. So we come back to the point that corporate religion is incomplete, inadequate to human life and need, if either the institutional or the rational element is allowed to be dominant. Through the institution and through the reasoning the Church too, like the individual, must follow on to know the Lord. She cannot attain to full-grown life unless the mystical element is dominant : not exclusive, but inclusive of the other two elements of religion. This does not mean that individual " mystics " must be called upon to govern : it means that the whole body must be mystical. There is no question here of subjective mysticism, "laying such an emphasis on the relation of the individual soul to God as to obscure its relation to men and to nature." We are dealing with the development of corporate religion, claiming that in the Church the Presence of Christ must be recognized and acknowledged as determinative of action and of thought (not merely of religious emotion). The present state of Church life would seem to imply that He is an absentee, or else lacking in wisdom, or practical ability, or adaptability to new needs and great crises. Such seems to be our unconscious assumption when we allow either the institutional or the rational

[1] So Edith Cavell has shown us. " Patriotism is not enough."

element of religion to dominate the whole : as though Christ were something in the past, or something to be reasoned about, and not the present Lord of all our life.

For this question of the three elements of religion is really the question of the Divinity of Christ. Mysticism is the recognition of the Person of Christ, the acknowledgment of His Presence as God : for God is He Who cannot be absent unless I put Him from me. The institutional and the rational elements of religion are therefore failures if they are not crowned by the mystical, for they just stop short of Christ. Institutionalism grounds us in good habits ; rationalism gives us clear thought and intelligent grasp of our situation ; but it is mysticism that launches us out for service, in all the activities of Love. Neither habits nor thoughts make up a full life ; Love alone does that. Worshippers of Christ are worshippers of Love. Servants of Christ are servants of Love. To look back on the course of our discussion to this point, we recall Christ's promise to be with us for ever ; we remember the New Testament experience of Him, creating new men and building them up into one Body in Love, which is Himself ; for they found Him by giving themselves up to Love ; and we realize that through the Christian centuries the real life of the Church has been the knowledge of Christ in God, which is the knowledge of Love in God. All this means that Love is alive and intelligent and capable : not a mere emotion, but the life and intelligence and capacity of the eternal God : not my or your caprice, but the rational principle and constant power of the universe : claiming our trust.

Now as being myself an Anglican, I feel called upon

to realize that the Anglican Communion is to a peculiar degree dominated by institutionalism, and thereby restrained from the full life of faith.[1] In our relations with other Christians our constant claim is that we are in the true line of succession from the past. Ours is "the historical faith." The "Lambeth Quadrilateral," defining the points essential to the Anglican Communion in any projects of reunion, is a statement of the great things from the past which we must not let go (Orders, Sacraments, Scriptures, Creeds). In our practical ministry we are dominated by this conception of a historic institution of whose inherited treasures we are the responsible stewards. We are apt to treat the Prayer Book as among the ultimate data of religion. From it we take God's message for the day; on it we base complete schemes of religious instruction. Our controversies are not about the meaning and methods of love, but about our traditions of doctrines and ceremonies. For the sake of these we lapse from love.

Responsibility for the present failure of Christendom lies with all of us who hold executive or doctrinal authority in this or other branches of the Church. We are responsible for the fact that in actual practice, in contrast with her ideal character, the Church so largely reflects the minds of men and not the mind of Christ. Whoever may have been responsible in the past, it is we who are responsible to-day—we who till

[1] "Fundamentally our religion consists in preserving a tradition," writes Dr. Headlam, and that in an article admirably bringing out the need of "a revived intellectual life, which will mean the application of thought to everything instead of acquiescence in unmeaning custom or bad traditions." *Church Quarterly Review*, October, 1916: "Where does the Defect of the Church Lie?"

now have accepted the situation and smugly lived our lives and exercised our ministry within its set conditions. We who stand professionally for the traditional doctrines and ceremonies are responsible for the Church's one-sided development, for her failure to attain the full stature. If Christ at the outset willed us to be perfect, have not we, His representatives, set at naught His commandment by our tradition—that is, by our over-emphasis on the tradition as tradition, as linking us to a past rather than to the present? Lop-sidedness is not perfection.

The unfairness of our ministry may in some respects have struck us. For why should our professions and employments be held sacred, and those of laymen be set down as secular? Why should we have much more constant access to means of grace than others can have? [1] But one particular unfairness is apt to escape our attention. In the ministry of conversion we call on men and women to break the habits of a lifetime, and to cast themselves in Christ's illimitable power to re-create them: and we know that they and He can do it. But we do not often think of making such a plunge ourselves: we do not contemplate a revolution in our own personal habits or modes of speech and thought. We have stamped these as sacred. Such heroism of self-surrender to the living Christ, of self-committal to the untrod Way, we only expect of comparative beginners. As for ourselves, we have settled down—settled to our own conceptions of religion, to our regular enjoyment of what appeals to us.

[1] Cf. Ezekiel xxxiv. We may disclaim the intention but we can hardly deny the fact of this broad distinction between clerical and lay life.

Christ did not say "Stand with Me," but "Follow Me," and His call to every generation is the same—the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. He is nearer to us, not farther, than He was to those fishermen in Galilee; but we seem slower to forsake our boats and nets than they were. He means us through His all-embracing, all-reconciling presence to do greater works than ever He did as an individual there—not to spend our time and energy in arguing about those less great works of His, whether and how they were ever done.

We know how to trust Him with the part—our own personal life: why do we not trust Him with the whole? If I know Him adequate for myself, why do I count Him inadequate for the persons and causes for which I am responsible? Why do we stake all on the maintenance of a tradition or the victory of a party?

As the Church's commissioned officials we feel responsible for the Church's heritage, and are disposed to take its maintenance into our own hands. Some insist that all must walk in the old ways; others insist that the memory of old persecutions must be kept fresh: seemingly ignorant of the Life that is always moving on, so that no to-day is the same as yesterday, save only as linked up in Him Who is the Life of all. Our fatal vice is this anxiety about our inheritance; in other words, our want of faith. Our very faithfulness is faithless.

We need not be so anxious about our inheritance, and if we need not, we ought not. For we really can safely leave it to God, to the nature with which He has endowed us all. We have already seen that denominational self-assertion is uncalled-for, because the denominational inheritance is an ineradicable part of

our spiritual make-up. And we have the present facts of patriotism: in every land we are in the grip of this mighty force; we need not anxiously grip it. An illustration of these latent forces in modern man is presented by the glorious efficiency of British soldiers, men from offices and factories and fields, who were supposed to be unfitted for war because never trained to it, but have been found in a few months equal to the best. There are mighty forces in us all which the Church has not yet mobilized.

It is not for us to be anxious about preserving these forces of our human nature. But it is for us to understand and control them. We can only rise above facts, and *use* them, by understanding them. Let us therefore understand our own and others' loyalty.

Understand it; i.e. understand Him. "*I* am the Way." That which seems an impersonal force, moving us all on resistlessly, welding us together in our corporate loyalties, is He, after all. To agree in acknowledging this would be to rise to adult religion, to bring the Church into line with God, into line with the experience of us all.

To this end we clergy and ministers must repent and alter. We must truly lead the way. The future is in our hands.

We are not asked to disown our own convictions and experiences of grace; but mutually to own the convictions and experiences of others. For example, I for my part shall ever treasure as most sacred the times when I prepared boys for baptism, and the Ember-tide retreats of candidates for ordination: together with the constant sacramental grace which I share with all my fellow-communicants. Such solemn times afforded by the institutions of the

Church have brought us right inside the workings of God. There can be no disillusionment about them. But we want to go on to proclaim that there is no place for any disillusionments in Christianity.

> Jesus lives. Our hearts know well
> Naught from us His love can sever.

Really we all have this faith, expressed in words and forms that we love, if we will but use it.[1]

There is no question of giving up the forms endeared to us by long experience. Mysticism does not mean scrapping our institutions. The mystical element must include those other elements which we now allow to dominate our religion; but it must now dominate them. There must of necessity be established forms and ceremonies (*a*) for the sake of children in years, (*b*) for the sake of children in the faith, (*c*) for the sake of us all: for to the end of our days we all need outward order and system if we are to have stability of inward life, and if we are to have social cohesion in a common loyalty, and if we are to build in ordered progress on the past. (And we have already noted that we cannot eliminate this institutional element even if we would.) Also there will be perpetual need for intellectual vigour and candour, the unfettered use of all our mental powers, in the cause of truth and honesty. But above all and in all and through all there must be direct acknowledgment of Christ present in our God.

The doctrine of Christ's Divinity is the peculiar boast of Christendom; that it applies to all life is a familiar truth, familiar as a theory or an ideal: it is the complete practice of it that seems so hard to arrive

[1] Cf. Swete, *The Ascended Christ*, pp. 162, 163.

at. Yet, maybe, it will not prove so hard if we really turn to Him for that application to all life. To do so, we must of necessity rise above our old institutional ruts: not necessarily to leave them, but at least to see that they are ruts, and not the whole road. Institutionalism means being inside the institution; rationalism means rising above it to view it from outside and in relation to other institutions; mysticism means recognizing God present and working in it and in them and in yourself who thus view His processes. Now though the institutional aspect of Anglicanism is what seems to loom largest before the world, it is not really the most important aspect. If we re-focus our view of religious facts, we may see that a far bigger thing in Anglicanism than the historical elements defined in the Lambeth Quadrilateral is the essential character of the Church as declared in the Encyclical Letter of the Lambeth Conference of 1908. It is the character of Service. "How the Church, in the Name of Him to whom all men are dear, may best serve for the true welfare and happiness of all—this, through all the diversity of detail, has been the constant theme of our study and discussion. . . . At the heart of that conception of the Church which Christ our Lord has taught us is the thought of Service. For He came, 'not to be ministered unto, but to minister,' and a Church is set to portray and represent Him amongst men; to keep the vision of Him, of His work, His ways, before the eyes of men. Therefore the Church must take for its own this central note of His purpose and His mission; the Church will be true to its calling in proportion as it can say to the world, by word and deed, by what it refuses and by what it claims: 'I come, not to be ministered unto, but to minister';

and it must be feared that the Church's forgetfulness of this, its obscuring or effacing of this central characteristic, has at times disastrously hindered the world from recognizing the true nature and office of the Church. The power to witness to Christ depends on being like Him. Men will always learn of Christ from those whom they see living with Christlike simplicity for their sake." [1] And as to our connection with the past, this Encyclical of our Bishops states that " we realize that the links which bind us to that historic past are not fetters upon the free and enterprising spirit which is essential to progress. We belong to a Church which . . . is the Church of free men, educating them into a knowledge of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free." " We must set before us the Church of Christ as He would have it, one spirit and one body, enriched with all those elements of divine truth which the separated communities of Christians now emphasize severally, strengthened by the interaction of all the gifts and graces which our divisions now hold asunder, filled with all the fulness of God. We dare not, in the name of peace, barter away those precious things of which we have been made stewards. Neither can we wish others to be unfaithful to trusts which they hold no less sacred. We must fix our eyes on the Church of the future, which is to be adorned with all the precious things, both theirs and ours. We must constantly desire not compromise but comprehension, not uniformity but unity."

Such was the vision of our two hundred and forty-two Bishops in 1908. But Anglicanism remains out-

[1] *Conference of Bishops of the Anglican Communion*, 1908 (S.P.C.K.), pp. 23, 24.

wardly as before, tied up in institutionalism. Our leaders would lead us out into the Way of God, but they have not been able. We are all alike: when we meet in the presence of God, Christ shows us the Way; but then we disperse and relapse into hugging our own inheritance.

The great usurpation continues to displace Christ from His rightful sovereignty in the Church. We are the usurpers, so long as we conduct the affairs of the Church according to our own stereotyped ideas, and refuse to give ourselves up to Love. We are usurpers if we behave as present representatives of an absent Christ. Personal repentance of us all is the only way out. We have to apply to our official life the practice of our private devotion. "We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts."

> "O Love, I give myself to Thee
> Thine ever, only Thine to be."

Then God can work, and will work, as He is working already when and where we allow Him. Call to witness all those who have experience of the corporate vitality and efficacy of such conferences as the Pan-Anglican, or those held at Swanwick. "There was no faintness of heart in facing great questions, and no narrowness of mind in dealing with them. The genuine wish to work together swept away all thoughts of partizanship, and brought instead the reality of mutual understanding. Minds and hearts were lifted up on high, and as from the Mount of God men saw visions of Service." This testimony of the Lambeth Encyclical Letter to the experience of the Pan-Anglican Congress voices the experience of multitudes of

us, at that and at other conferences. What is often spoken of as the " atmosphere " of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference, or of Swanwick, or of many Student Movement Conferences, is an experience of this mighty power of God in Christ, and a revelation of the Way for us to walk in. For there men and women meeting are brought into a unity that they had not dreamt of. There the biggest problems are tackled, and the Way begins to open out through the political or ecclesiastical tangles which have held us up. In all such experiences we need to get beyond the thought of the atmosphere to the thought of Christ, from the impersonal to the personal. For it is He. We are not merely enjoying an atmosphere which we create by warmth of numbers. He is the New Creator, not we. We are out on the hill-tops, breathing the fresh breezes of heaven. We plunge into the fresh springs of the water of life. It is not a matter of our numbers. Throughout Christendom, countless experiences of the " two or three " prove the truth of Christ. He is the Way, when men will meet. That it is He and not we is being realized most vividly and most completely in the Fellowships of Silence, where through union in silence before God people are led into a unity of life transcending any they could attain by their own efforts.[1] We leave the strife of tongues and find that in His Will is our peace : " to them that believe, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

For Christ is at work among us, and not only " here " or " there." He is in God, and therefore in the world ; not limited to this or that Church ; not limited to

[1] Cf. *The Fellowship of Silence ;* also *Fruits of Silence,* by Cyril Hepher.

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ecclesiatical organizations. He is working in men as men, in all the nations, preparing them for allegiance to His Kingdom. We are finding that conference works better than conflict. In our own country in particular we can already note "the rapid growth of reasonable methods in politics. More and more questions are settled by general agreement and without the military pomp of a full-dress debate." "Progress is in theory, and has been in fact, the steady development of the principle of co-operation and fellowship as compared with that of competition and antagonism. The acceptance of Majority-rule, as if the will of the majority were the will of all, is a step in that direction; but still more important and significant is the gradual substitution of settlement by discussion in committees for the official party-combats in the House of Commons. Throughout the industrial and commercial world the same tendency is observable. If our labour disputes are nowadays more serious than in the past, it is precisely because both labour and capital are becoming more co-operative and less competitive in themselves." [1]

So Christ is working His purpose out. And if we further look out upon the British Empire and con-

[1] W. Temple on "The Nature of Government," in *Some Aspects of the Woman's Movement*, pp. 153, 154 (Student Christian Movement, 1915). To any persons still prepossessed by the idea of party government, a study of recent politics in China may be commended. In this Republic the imitation of our Western party system ruined the first attempt at parliamentary government and now almost stultifies the second. That which absorbs the attention and efforts of politicians is the formation and conflicts of parties, while great social and economic miseries of the people go unregarded. Is it the real England that is thus being followed? Is this what England's political development means to the world?

sider, as in these days we must needs consider, what it is for, we may dare to find here too that Christ is working out His original purposes. "Our Empire rests on liberty; but this is also the root principle, on the human side, of that Kingdom which Christ came to proclaim and found. At the beginning of His Ministry our Lord repudiated the only ways that there are of controlling men's conduct otherwise than by securing the free allegiance of their hearts and wills. He would not use His power for the satisfaction of creature comforts; He would not force men into His obedience; and He would not overpower their wills with irresistible evidence. He would not, that is to say, either bribe them or coerce them, or convince them against their will. But He would live before men the life of Perfect Love and die before them a death of Perfect Love, so drawing them to Himself. In other words, His Kingdom on its human side rests on freedom. There is, then, a real affinity in root principle between what we call the British Empire and the Kingdom of God itself. Our Empire has many great and glaring faults which need to be purged away, but it is the first great world structure which has rested on this spiritual foundation. It is ready, as no other Empire has been, for the consecrating touch."[1]

The process of the British Empire (may we not say, the process which *is* the British Empire) is that of the larger Will to which the latter wills submit while they contribute. It is this process which gives us "the problem of the Commonwealth." "Our British problem is a bigger, more complicated one than any the Cæsars had to deal with, for the ideal that animates

[1] *The Call of the Kingdom*, by W. Temple (National Mission Pamphlets, A).

and justifies our Imperialism is that of progressive self-government."

These problems, whether of Church or of State, are the problems of human relationship. What is happening in this modern world of ours is the discovery that we are members of a larger entity, that our life is but part of a larger life. We have not yet quite found out what that Whole is to which we belong, but we shall soon find out that it is Christ—He whose service is perfect freedom, He in Whom we all are one. If I speak specially of the British Empire, it is not to limit Christ thereto, but because it is my part as an Englishman to understand my own national life. Others will know of Christ's working in their national life towards the same end.

"The Lord has opened the windows of Heaven, and has poured out the Spirit of fellowship upon us. And that Spirit is amongst us, patiently waiting until we have tried all other means, and are willing to cast ourselves upon His help. When we are ready to do this we shall discover that He can work in ways that are beyond our present comprehension. It will be the next Church movement. The call is to go forward. We may be certain that a special reward awaits those who have the faith and the daring to obey." [1]

This will be to bring the Church into line with the great world forces which are the mighty working of God; it will be to bring those forces into the Church. It has been well said that the problem before us is not that of free Churches in a free State, but of free States in a free Church.[2] "By its light will the nations walk;

[1] *Christ and the Church*, by A. W. Robinson (S.P.C.K., 1915).

[2] *Church and Nation*, by W. Temple (Macmillan, 1915), p. 52.

and into it will the kings of earth bring their glories ; the gates of it will never be shut by day, and night there shall be none."

When we all make this new plunge into fellowship, the Church will be no congeries of petty groups, for the fellowship is the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, and the new life will be one of participation in the life of God. Our individual plunge will not imperil the catholicity of the Church ; she will at last be true to her character as the Body of Christ, "welded together and compacted by every joint with which it is supplied, the due activity of each part enabling the Body to grow and build itself up in love" (Eph. iv. 16). The Church in each place will be the Catholic Church in miniature.[1] The Christians in each place will be one Body, knowing that wherever men are gathered in His Name, there is He in the midst of them. Then it will be seen that Church order is the order of love, the order of mutual honour, of honour shown to our contemporaries, but also to our forefathers and theirs : with a tender respect for all that we have inherited from them, seeing that they with us are alive in Christ. The facts of the actual situation in every place must be determinative of action, because we recognize facts as God's acts ; and because the whole *modus operandi* of love is to act on the present facts without restraint of prejudice or fear. This does not mean parochialism, not that type of Congregationalism which has found

[1] See two articles by Rev. Herbert Kelly in *The East and the West*, April and July, 1916, on "The Pattern of a Missionary Church" and "The Pattern of the Early Church ; the Formation of the Ministry" (S.P.C.K.). Cf. Bishop Walpole, *Vital Religion*, p. 170, on local variations in forms of worship.

out its own inadequacy.[1] For all such narrowness rests on blindness to facts, or ignorance of what others are doing or have done, or of our vital dependence on others, especially on those who are leaders of thought.

The Church will thus attain to that unity in diversity which is the essence of fellowship, as it is the essence of Christ's religion. Then religion will "continually equal and exceed all other interests by its own persistent vitality, its rich and infinite variety, its subtle, ever-fresh attraction and inexhaustible resourcefulness and power."[2]

Thus freed by Christ, because ruled by Him, the Church will give us "the moral alternative for war." "When nations come to understand the great Christian adventure, and learn that in pursuing it they will find their own highest life, then war will drop out of the world's life just as swords are dropped by men who want to paint, or make music, or tend gardens, or write poerty. It will seem so mean an interruption to life's real business that men will refuse to debase themselves with it. Then, indeed, there will be peace in the smaller sense, but only because the world will be full of the noise and the joy of the warfare of God. It is Christ and Christ alone who can offer to men something so great that for the sake of it they will forego the joy of battle."[3]

The Church will then show that absolute respect for personality which is essential to the character of Christ and is the goal of all self-discipline, the ideal of

[1] See "Congregationalism and its Ideal." Meredith Davies. *Constructive Quarterly*, September, 1915.

[2] Von Hügel: cf. above, p. 56.

[3] Papers for War Time, No. 27, *The Only Alternatine to War*, A. Herbert Gray. Oxford University Press, 1915.

modern education, the true motive of all popular movements. "There is nothing so exquisitely and increasingly sensitive as the Christ fellowship or body," writes Bishop Brent. Utter respect for the individual is the antithesis of that impersonal treatment of people in the mass which is the ground of all partizanships and wars. This impersonal treatment of people in the mass is what confuses the anti-pacifist argument about defending the attacked, and muddles our minds on the subject of violence. Violent resistance to brutal assault on the weak is one thing when you mean the actual persons concerned; quite another when you lump together myriads of guilty and innocent under some imaginary general category which does not fit the facts of life. The partizan view of men in masses is un-Christian because it is untrue. There is no room for party organization in the Catholic Church of Christ.

In the Catholic Church of Christ the riddle of death will be solved, not merely doctrinally, but practically. For when the Church comes back to the way of love we shall know what the Communion of Saints means. We shall be quiet enough, unhurried enough, sensitive enough, to realize our spiritual environment; we shall have time and attention for our friends whom we set down as "lost." We shall perceive that "death sets powers free so that presence may be extended. This is not a speculative assertion, but a fact of history capped by the common experience of men of to-day. . . . The presence not only abides, but continues to operate here in a refined manner. It is not that it alters its mode of operation, but that we who remain perceive that which was hitherto only partially apparent to us. We often attribute influence to the in-

cidentals of personality instead of to the eternized personality which death unveils." [1]

By throwing ourselves on Christ we can enter into that communion of saints; we can enter into the full life and powers of the Church which is His Body. Why let our institutions or our prejudices hold us back from this glorious consummation for which the whole world waits?

St. Paul had vision to see that the Jewish Law had served as a tutor to bring Israel to Christ. To-day we should likewise see that all the various systems of the Churches have now made it possible for us all to enter into the liberty of fellowship in Christ. We have been "under guardians and stewards until the time appointed of the Father": now He calls us to enter on the privileges of sons.

That, we must repeat, does not mean giving up our sacraments. That would be contrary to the whole argument of this book. It would certainly be contrary to the meaning and practice of St. Paul. Sonship to him meant enrichment, not impoverishment, "All things are yours." As sons we are freed from prejudice, our sympathies are broadened, we can be "all things to all men," true to ourselves, but able to enter into the life of others. I have never yet communicated except as an Anglican, under the Anglican rite: but why should I not, under this realization of sonship?

What becomes of the sacraments if we relax our disciplinary restrictions? They become what they are, not memorials of the Dead, but actions of the Living; not symbols of an absent Christ, but tokens of His Presence; just as with other friends the hand-

[1] Bishop Brent, *Presence*.

shake or the kiss are an acknowledgment of present union.[1]

Christian baptism was originally a real entry into a real life, a transition from one society into another, actual incorporation into the Christian fellowship. Later it became a rite in itself, as applied to an individual apart from any real entry into fellowship. If we restore the Christian fellowship, the sacraments will again be matters not of theological speculation, but of immediate fact ; the focus of all social effort.

The constant peril of religion is petrifaction ; the substitution of one legalism for another, a Christian law for a Judaic, a Protestant for a Catholic. Psychology, like other sciences, dissolves the arbitrary distinctions, and reveals the real processes of life and death, whether operative through circumcision, or through baptism, or through any other rite. But that impartiality of science is what we religious people so grievously lack. St. Paul's call to sonship thus comes home to us to-day, recalling us to personal relationship to the Father of all.

" My one thought is, by forgetting what lies behind me and straining to what lies before me, to press on to the goal for the prize of God's high call in Christ Jesus. For all those of our number who are mature this must be the point of view ; God will reveal that to any of you who look at things differently. Only we must let our steps be guided by such truth as we have attained."[2]

" I am the Way." The Way is well known in the

[1] " Our hope rests not on Institutions, nor on Sacraments, but on a Person, and He is very near." The Dean of Westminster, in the *National Mission*, November, 1916.

[2] Phil. iii. 13–16.

Church, though the Church does not yet walk in it. It is the vision of all our prophets, though obscured by all us priests. Our prophets indeed have most of them been also priests: there need be no antagonism or antipathy between these two functions of the Church's ministry: but it is as prophets, interpreting the present and revealing the future, rather than as authorized exponents of the past that our great teachers have taught us. Westcott and Hort were such—teachers to whom the Church has not yet listened, men to whose vision we have not opened our eyes. "That which hath been is and ever will be. If the Presence of Christ seem in some sense to be taken from us in these later days, the apparent removal calls out a blessing never before given. Each movement, each semblance, of separation becomes for believers the revelation of Divine Majesty. The words written of the first disciples will be found true of every disciple in every age: *He led them out until they were over against Bethany*—out of the sacred precincts which enclosed all that they held most sacred, past the scene of the Agony and the scene of the Weeping—*and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while He blessed them, He parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem*—returned, having lost the Lord from their sight that they might have Him for ever—*with great joy; and were continually in the Temple, blessing God.*"[1] So Bishop Westcott expressed his own faith in the Risen Lord: "We require," he said, "to be taken up out of our little circle of strifes and questionings, as it were, into the mountain,

[1] Westcott, *Revelation of the Risen Lord*, pp. 183, 184; and passim.

that so we may regard our King in His glory, as He has there revealed Himself. It is not by narrowing our vision or our sympathy, by fixing our eyes on that which is congenial to our feelings, by excluding from our interest whole regions of Christendom, that we can gain the repose of faith. We must dare to look on the broad and chequered aspect of life." [1]

Dr. Hort too writes of Christ as the Way.[2] "As He who had been leading a chosen few along a way which He shared with them revealed Himself in that hour as the one universal Way, so the same revelation, when understood and embraced in its full breadth, delivers His Church from helpless dependence on any partial tokens or recognitions of His guidance. It beckons onward not to some laxer and feebler form of allegiance to Him as safer and more lasting; but to a faith in Him, and in the treasures hidden in Him, both deeper and wider in itself, and more complete in its mastery over our whole nature, than any to which we have yet attained. It is not ill but well for the Church that some temporal and external characteristics which marked the time of probation and apprenticeship should vanish, even though we can scarcely distinguish their loss from the loss of Him to whom for long centuries they have borne witness. If He takes away any familiar signs of His presence, it is because they are becoming hindrances to the ripening of discipleship. New knowledge of Him has to be learned: new works for Him have to be undertaken. It is His own voice which bids us 'arise and go hence,' that we may find Him and follow Him elsewhere."

The words of the prophets are useless unless we lay

[1] Westcott, *Revelation of the Risen Lord*, pp. 162, 163.

[2] Hort, *The Way, the Truth, the Life*, pp. 33, 34.

them to our hearts. God grant that we may take time to meditate on such words as these just quoted.

"We do therefore solemnly enjoin upon pastors and preachers that their first duty is to retire periodically within the veil, and walk with God, in order to come forth and proclaim His clear revelation of Himself made through the ages; and to re-affirm in this our day of distress that He understands and rules the race which He shaped with His own Hand, and with which He irrevocably identified Himself when He became the Son of Man" (Pastoral letter of the American Bishops, General Convention, 1916).

To attempt here to map out the way would be to stultify the argument of this book. The whole point is that we none of us know, but that we can know as we go if we unite in Him. But since the Way is He, and we all know something of Him, we can outline some of the features; and that we have been trying to do in these few pages.

Do we still feel that the programme is too vague? So too is that of lovers at their marriage, if mutual trust is vagueness: if their dispensing with detailed drafts of future action is vagueness. If we at once repudiate the charge as levelled against any such true lovers, we may, with equal vigour repudiate it as levelled against that other Married Couple, Christ and the Church. Indeed, all who know anything about love and faith know that these involve a "setting out, not knowing whither they are going."

> I loved to choose and see my path, but now
> Lead Thou me on.
> I do not ask to see
> The distant scene; one step enough for me.

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude,

and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.

Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

## POSTSCRIPT

THE whole point of the foregoing pages lies in action, here and now. The actions required of me as a priest are actions of repentance : in view of the condition of the Church and of the world to-day, such actions alone can be actions of hope. I have said that we cannot lay down a detailed programme for the future of the Church, for that is her Lord's concern. But it is essential for each of us to lay down a definite programme for himself, that we may come into line with Him. " The transition, I fear, will not be without much pain," said Archbishop Temple (see above, chap. VI, p. 71) ; but our repentance will be worthless without that pain. We have to put into practice our new vision of God : knowing that to quarrel is to put Christ from us, to love is His embrace. Christ is not divided. If I am living, or teaching, or worshipping in separation from fellow-Christians, in the ending of that separation lies my way of repentance and of hope.

*Printed in Great Britain by* Butler & Tanner, *Frome and London.*

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